ARTHUR ADAMS 3-12 2012

MARVEL

VOL 2

SECRET AVENGERS®

REMENDER
GUEDES
SCALERA

AVX TIE-IN!

Thor leads a secret team of Avengers on a suicide mission to stop the Phoenix by any means necessary!

Who is Minister Marvel, and why has he drawn the Phoenix to the Kree homeworld? The Avengers devise a way to save the Kree, but one man stands in their way: the original Captain Marvel, reborn to unite his people! Can Ms. Marvel and the Protector break free of Minister Marvel's influence to aid their former companions? Plus: Can Hawkeye and Black Widow unmask the spy on their team in time to prevent tragedy? And as Hawkeye, Venom and Ant-Man face the Masters of Evil — an army of villains unlike any ever seen before — to save Max Fury, the Shadow Council's true goal is revealed! Enter the power of the Abyss!

T+

Collecting *Secret Avengers* #26-32 — written by **Rick Remender**, and illustrated by **Renato Guedes** and **Matteo Scalera**.

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MARVEL VOL 2

REMENDER
GUEDES
SCALERA

SECRET AVENGERS

MARVEL

26

A VS X

REMENDER
GUEDES
BREITWEISER

SECRET AVENGERS

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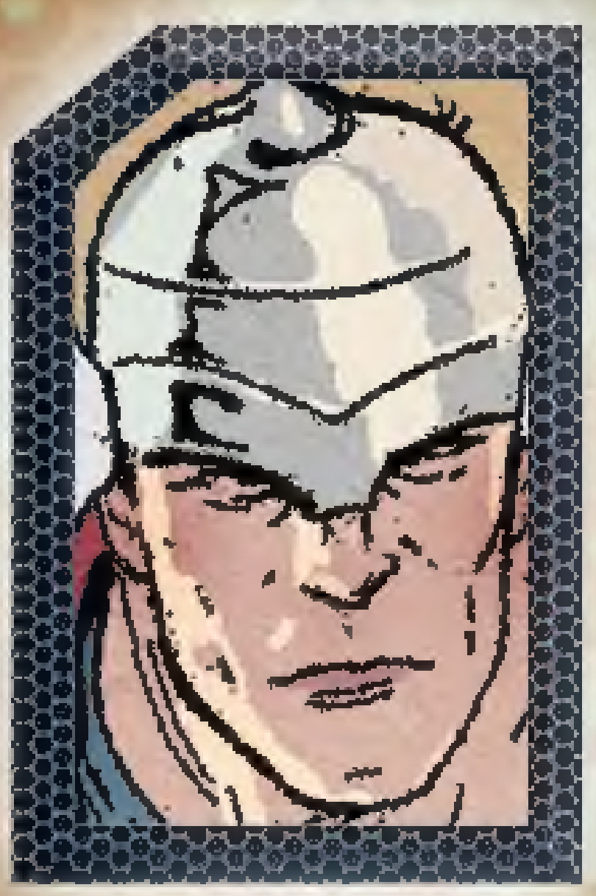
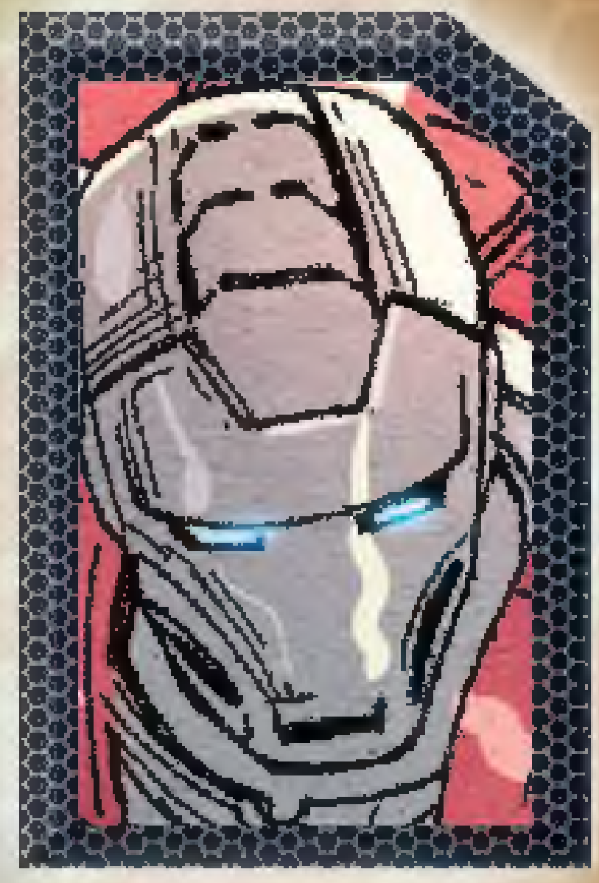
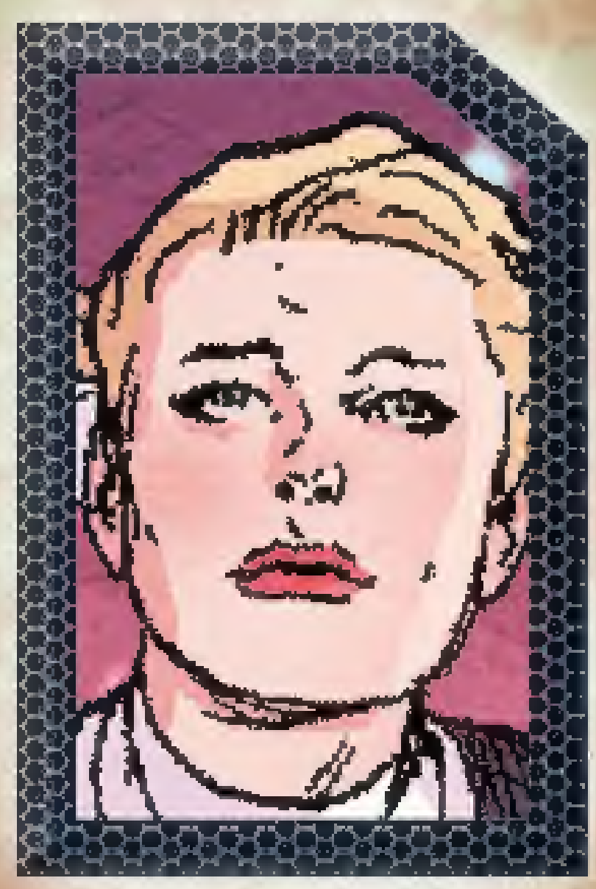
BROUGHT TOGETHER AS A COVERT MISSIONS UNIT BY STEVE ROGERS, A.K.A. CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND BASED ON THE MINIATURIZED LIGHTHOUSE STATION IN ORBIT ABOVE THE EARTH, THE SECRET AVENGERS TAKE ON THE WORLD'S BIGGEST THREATS BEFORE THEY HAPPEN.

SECRET AVENGERS





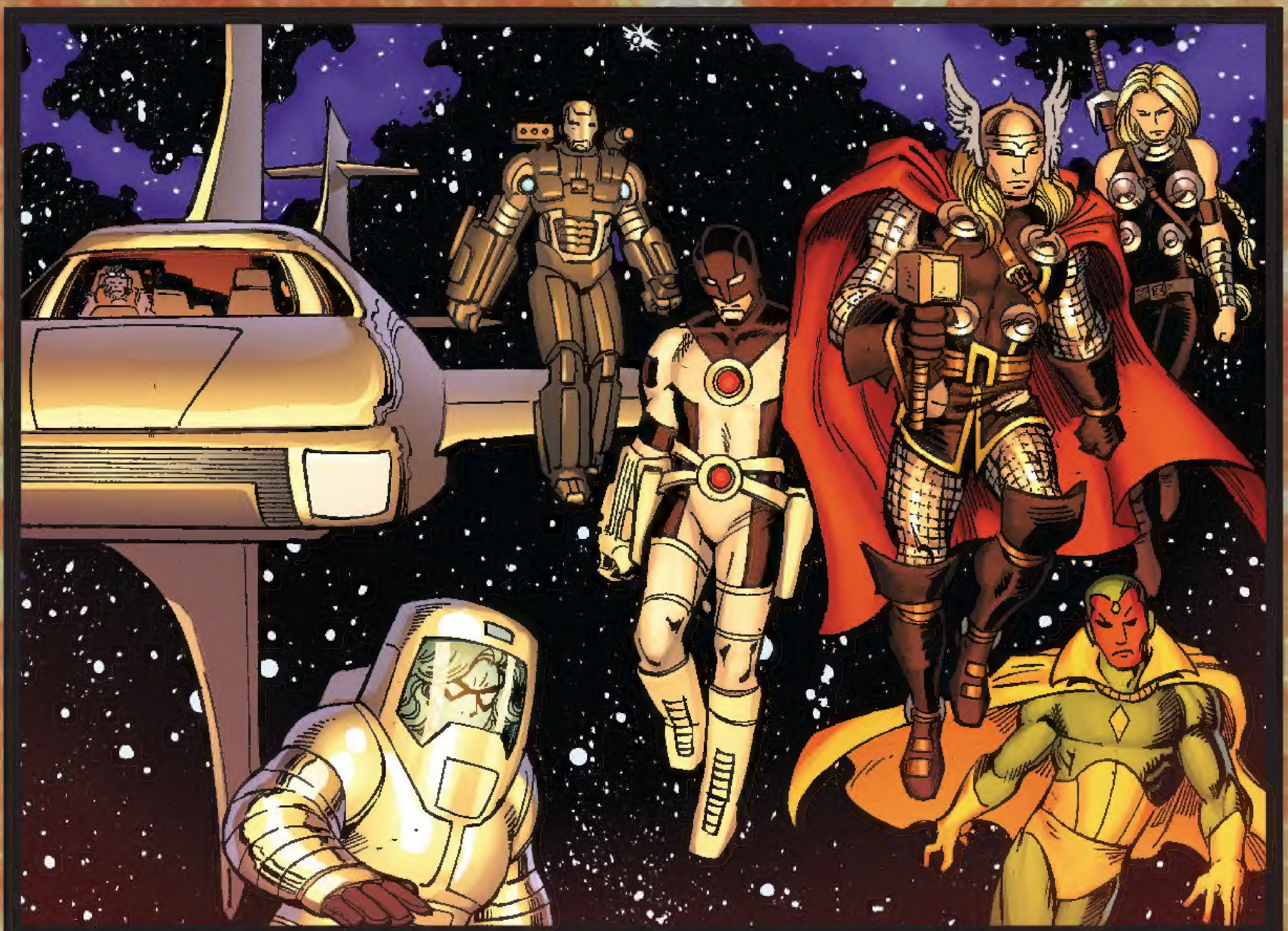


CAPTAIN BRITAIN

PREVIOUSLY IN AVENGERS VS X-MEN:

THE PHOENIX FORCE IS A COSMIC ENTITY CAPABLE OF CAUSING A PLANET-WIDE EXTINCTION EVENT.

IT'S ON ITS WAY TO EARTH, AND THE AVENGERS ARE GOING TO BE THE ONLY THING STANDING IN ITS WAY.



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I AM WHAT WAS, WHAT IS, *WHAT WILL BE!*
I WATCH HELPLESSLY AS THE PHOENIX CONSUMES JEAN GREY'S SOUL.
LEAVING ONLY A SHELL WITH THE VISAGE OF MY OLD FRIEND.
THE BLACK ANGEL!
BEHIND THOSE ONCE-FAMILIAR EYES IT LIVES--
POWER INCARNATE.
A COSMIC DEMON INTENT ON ENDING OUR WORLD.
I AM CHAOS BRINGER!
THE FATE OF THE UNIVERSE IN ITS HANDS.
I KNOW BECAUSE IT SAYS SO.
AND I BELIEVE IT SPEAKS TRUTHFULLY.
BUT THIS IS ALL WRONG.
BURNING I REMEMBER, JEANNIE REGAINED CONTROL--TOOK HER OWN LIFE.
SHE STOPPED THE PHOENIX.
IF SHE HADN'T WE WOULD HAVE SEEN THE BIRD'S TRUE PURPOSE.

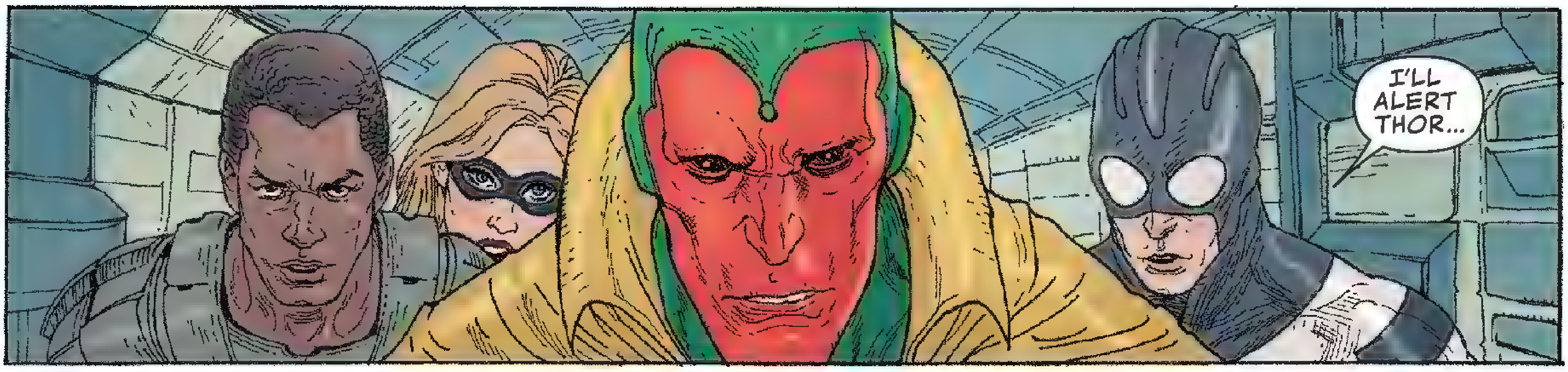
WE WOULD HAVE SEEN *FIRE.*
RHA--!
STILL CAN'T SHAKE IT, EH?
MY SUBCONSCIOUS KEEPS REGURGITATING BAD MEMORIES ON ANY ATTEMPT AT DREAMING.
ZAAKK
I'VE GIVEN UP ON SLEEP.
I MADE *STRONG* TEA.
WHEN RACHEL SUMMERS CONTROLLED THE PHOENIX, BRIAN, DID SHE EVER LOSE CONTROL?
NO. BUT RACHEL GREW UP IN HELL.
SHE'S MORE RESILIENT THAN HER MOTHER.
PSHAW. JEAN WAS DREADFULLY STRONG.
AND THAT FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH DARK PHOENIX MAY WELL SAVE US NOW.
THE MNEMONIC SCRAMBLER I PLACED ON JEAN'S HEAD GAVE ME ENOUGH INFORMATION TO DEVELOP THAT *PHOENIX CAGE* YOU'RE FINISHING.
ONCE INSIDE THE CAGE THOSE INFINITY COILS WILL LOOP THE ENERGY, HOLDING THE PHOENIX WITHIN.
IT'S ONE OF A KIND. WE ONLY GET ONE SHOT.
BUT WILL IT BE STRONG ENOUGH TO HOLD?
YES, I'M FAIRLY CERTAIN.
EITHER WAY IT WILL TRANSMIT A STREAM OF CRUCIAL UNKNOWNS TO TONY STARK BACK ON EARTH...

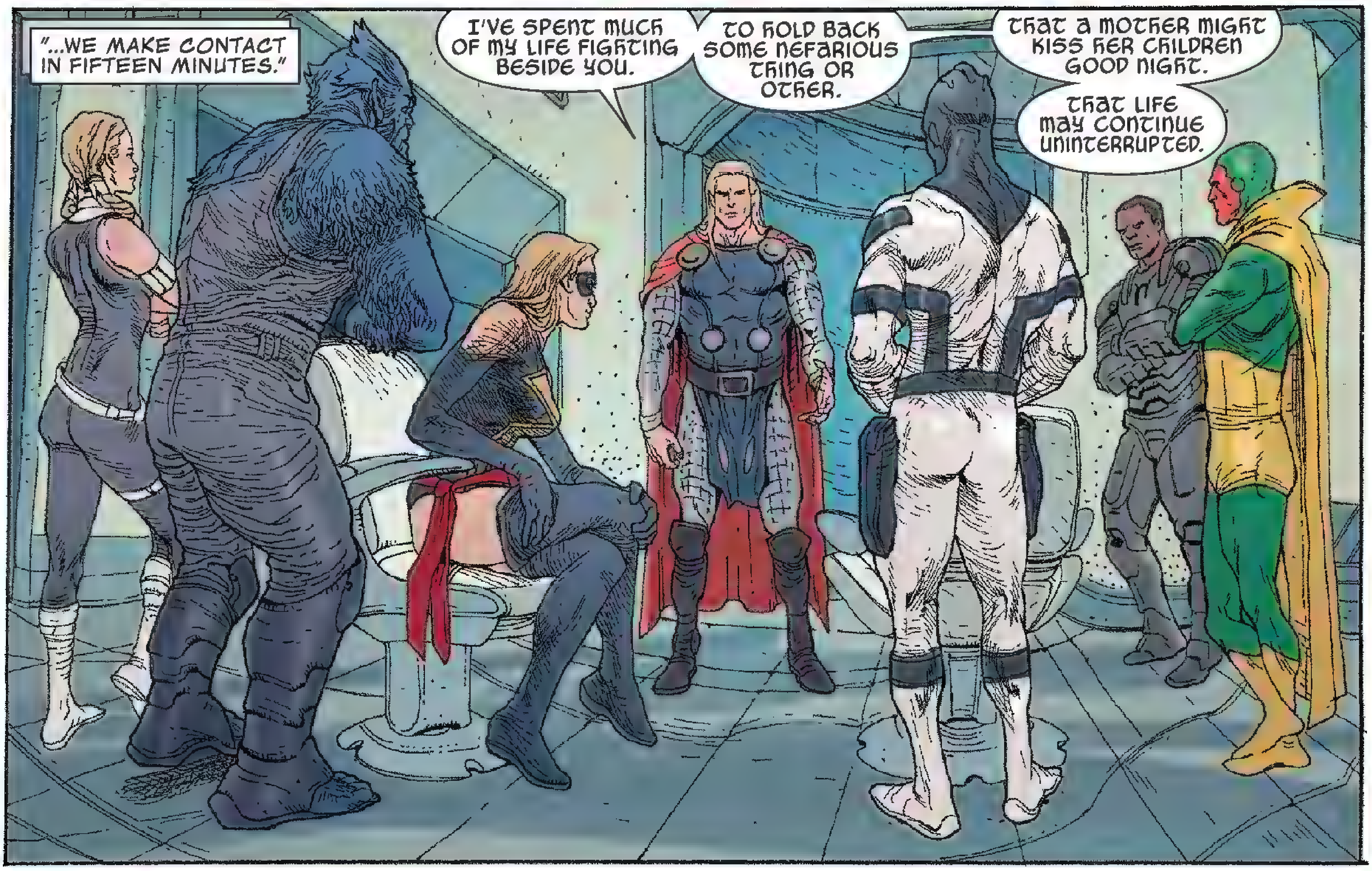
...GIVING THE OTHER AVENGERS INFORMATION TO FORM A BACKUP PLAN.
I SEE. SO IF WE CAN'T STOP THE PHOENIX AT LEAST WE CAN BE A BLACK BOX RECORDER?
TO BE PLAINSPOKEN-- YES.
HAR! IT IS AS YOU SAID-- THEY ARE AWAKE WITH WORRY!
I'VE SERVED WITH BEAST FOR MANY YEARS, AS A DEFENDER AND AN AVENGER.
HE PREFERS TO FRET.
TOOOM
I WAS UNDER THE ASSUMPTION THIS WAS A DIRE SITUATION, THOR.
INDEED IT IS. SO DIRE THAT DRINK IS REQUIRED.
IF WE ARE ABOUT TO DIE, WHY SPEND OUR FINAL MOMENTS VEXED?
WE WERE FINALIZING THE CAGE THAT OUR PLANS HINGE ON.
AND THIS IS DONE NOW?
JUST.
THEN WE CELEBRATE, BRADDOCK.
NO...THANK YOU. I CAN BE A SPECTACULAR ARSE WHEN I DRINK.

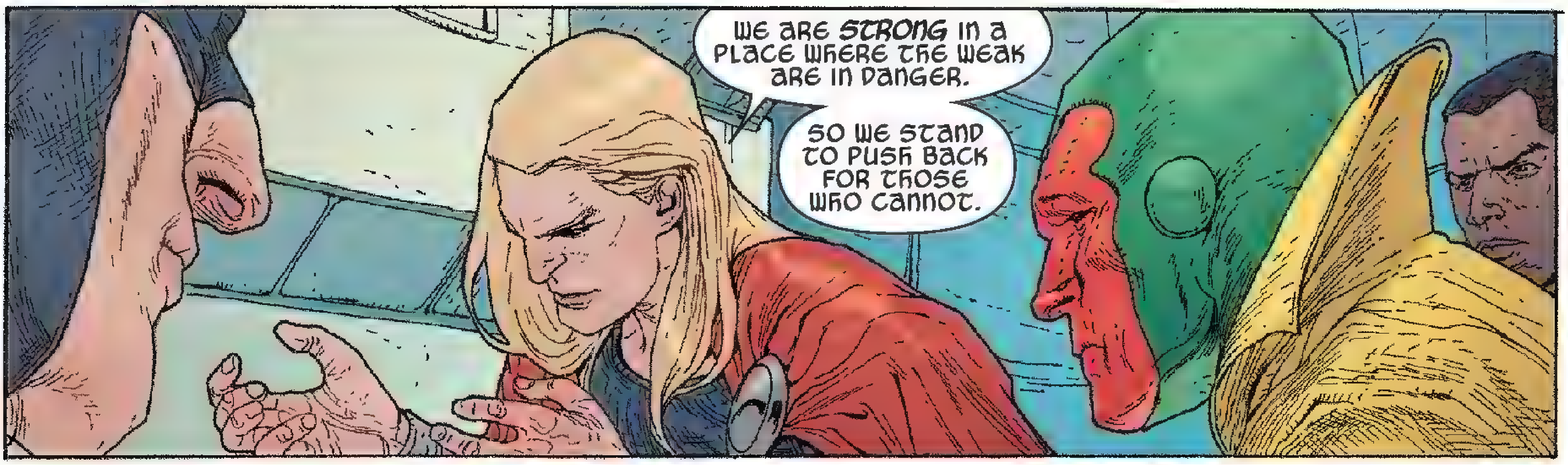
YOUR ANXIETY IS CAUSING ME CONCERN.
NERVES AND FEAR WILL NOT HELP YOU FIND YOUR CONFIDENCE, ENGLISHMAN.
WHAT WILL?
DRINK, I'LL RISK ARISING YOUR IRE.
BOOZE TO BUILD CONFIDENCE.
IF EARTH IS STILL AROUND IN A FEW WEEKS WE'LL HAVE TO FILM A P.S.A.
COME, LEAVE McCOY TO HIS NIGHT SWEATS AND TEA...
"...TONIGHT WE WARRIORS DRINK!"
THE SLIVER OF THE M'KRAAN CRYSTAL YOU HOLD IS OLDER THAN ALL RECORDED TIME.

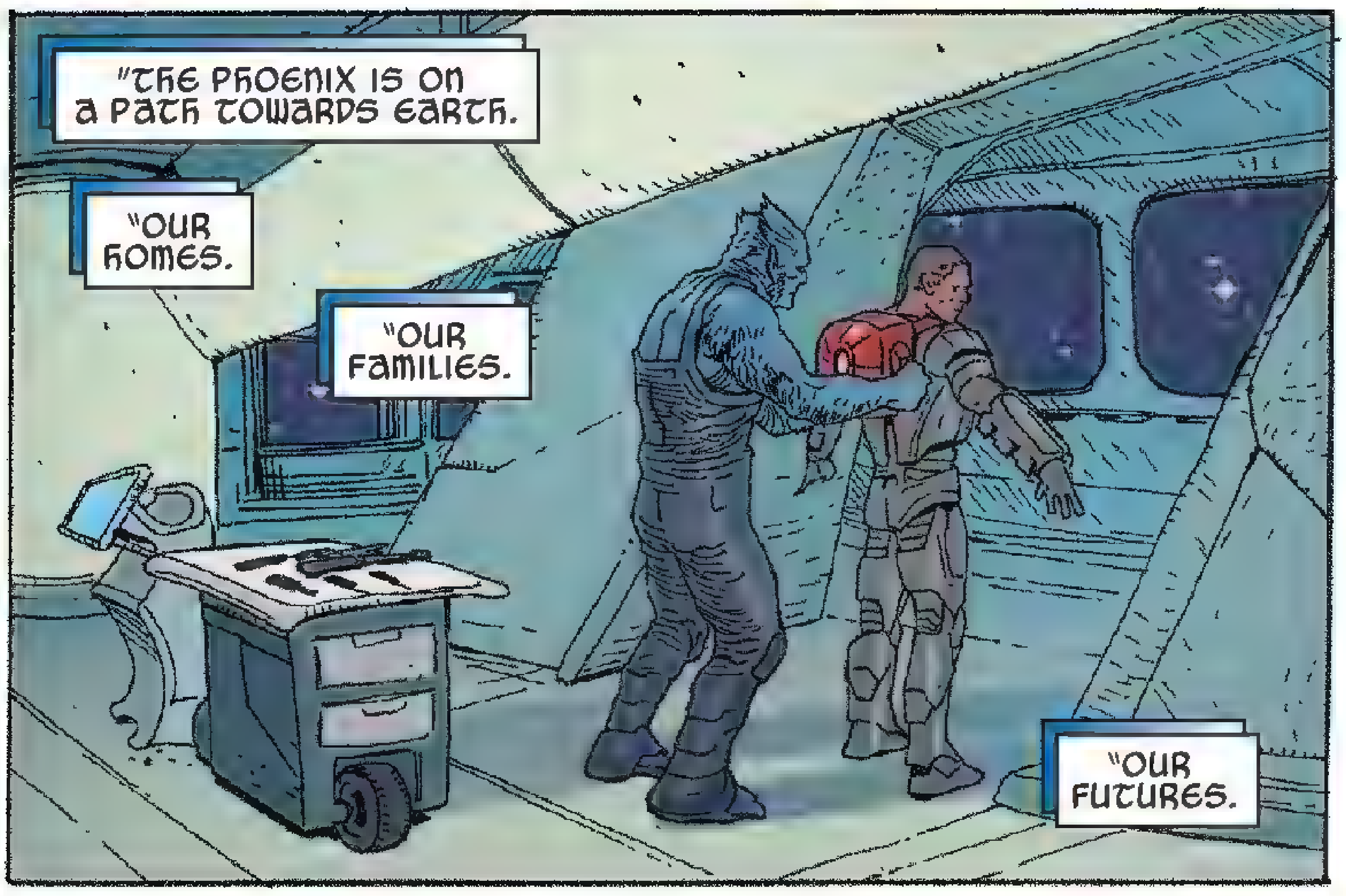
INSIDE IT EXISTS THE WHITE HOT ROOM.
HOME TO THE PHOENIX.
A DOORWAY TO THE ROOM CAN BE OPENED WITH EVEN A SLIVER OF THE M'KRANN CRYSTAL.
ONCE MAGNIFIED BY THIS OMNIWAVE STATION OUR CEREMONY WILL COMMENCE.
THE DOOR WILL OPEN.
A BEACON DRAWING OUR COSMIC DESTINY TO US.
A TRAITOROUS WARRIOR WILL ATONE FOR TURNING AWAY FROM HALA.
HE WILL SERVE HIS PEOPLE, COAXING THEM FORWARD TO THEIR BRIGHT TOMORROW.
USING HIS GREAT POWER TO SHOW THE KREE PEOPLE...

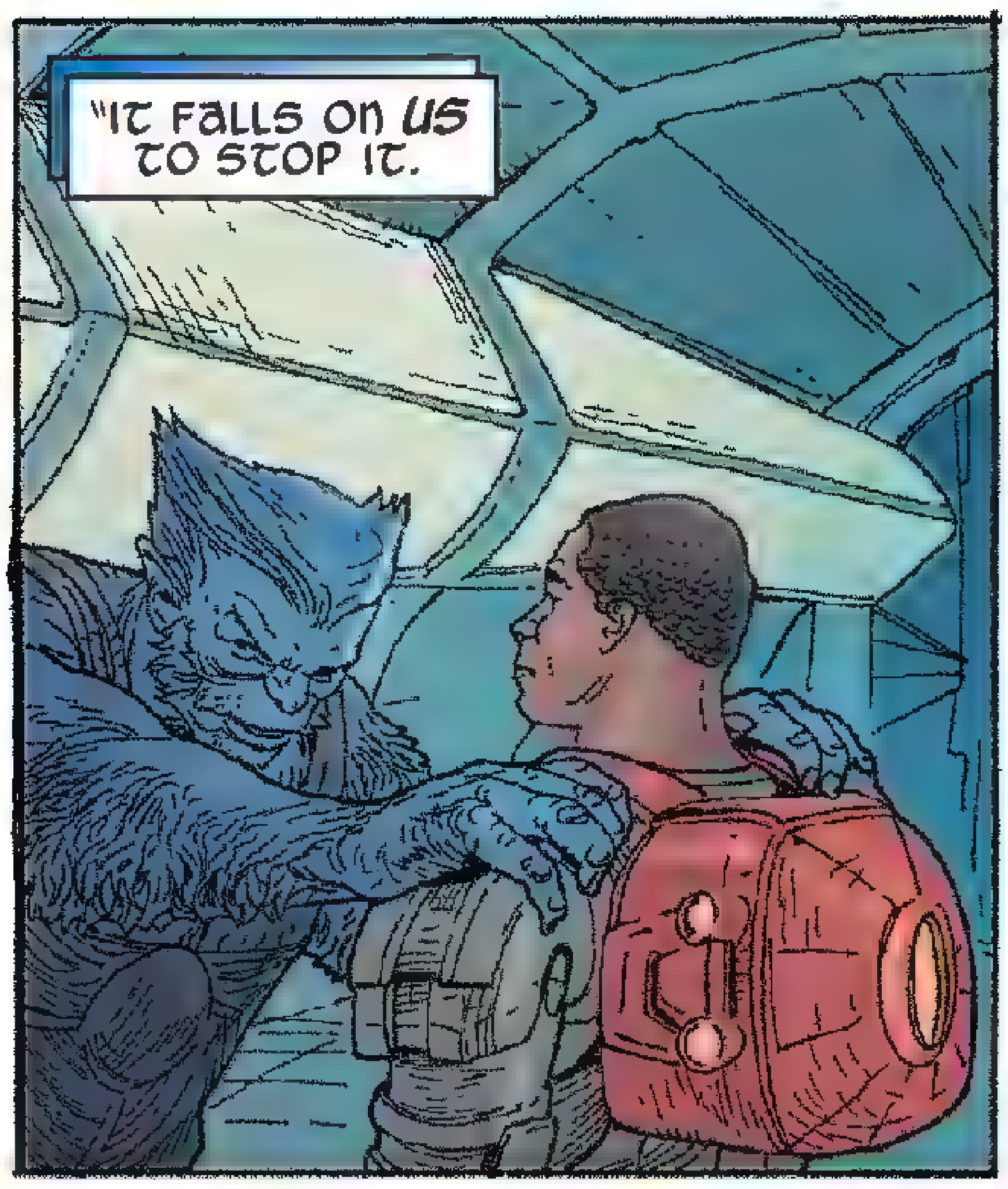
"...A GRAND DESTINY AWAITS WITHIN THE TENDER CLASP OF THE PHOENIX."
THE DRE'LNN WERE ONCE A RACE OF BEINGS MOTIVATED SOLELY TO CONQUER AND SUBJUGATE OTHER WORLDS.
AND WHEN THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT TO CONQUER, THEY TURNED ON EACH OTHER.
THE GREAT WAR LED TO ENDLESS STRIFE AND FAMINE.
THROUGH SUFFERING, THE DRE'LNN CAME TO SEE A BETTER WAY.
LOVE AND TEMPERANCE.
FOR A MILLION YEARS THEY HAVE SERVED AS AMBASSADORS OF PEACE.
THREE HOURS AGO THEY CEASED TO EXIST.

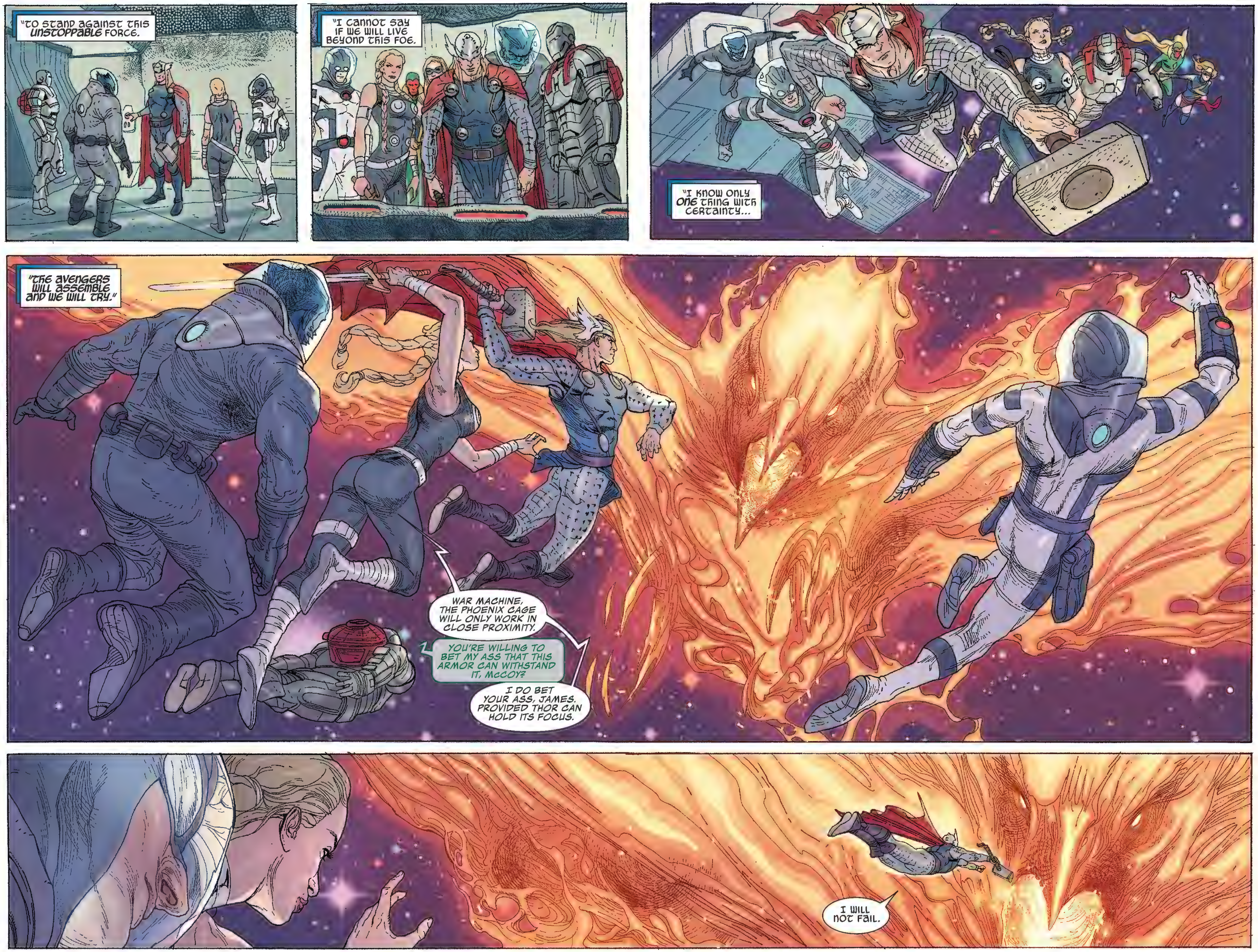

I'LL ALERT THOR...

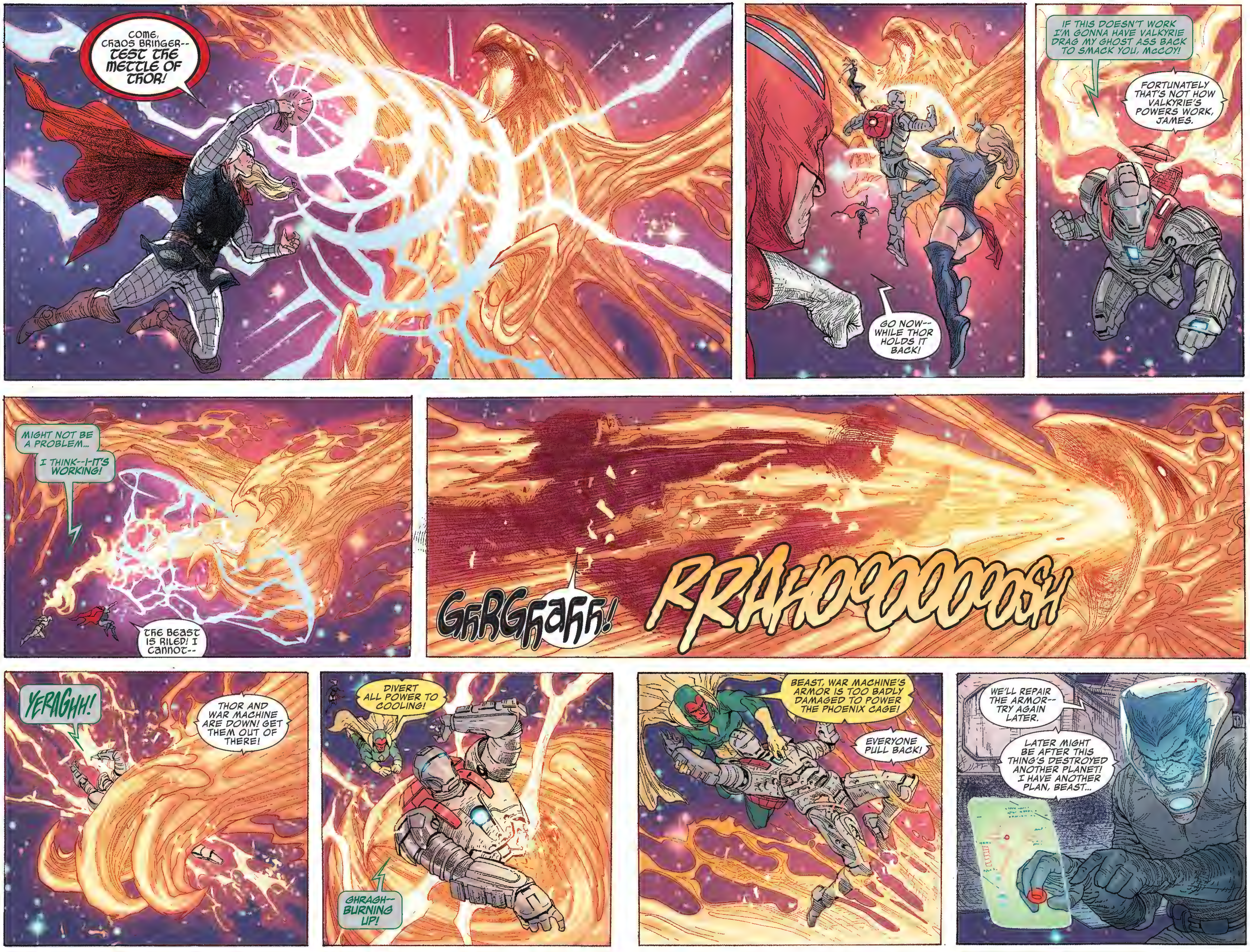

"...WE MAKE CONTACT IN FIFTEEN MINUTES."
I'VE SPENT MUCH OF MY LIFE FIGHTING BESIDE YOU.
TO HOLD BACK SOME NEFARIOUS THING OR OTHER.
THAT A MOTHER MIGHT KISS HER CHILDREN GOOD NIGHT.
THAT LIFE MAY CONTINUE UNINTERRUPTED.


WE ARE STRONG IN A PLACE WHERE THE WEAK ARE IN DANGER.
SO WE STAND TO PUSH BACK FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT.


"THE PHOENIX IS ON A PATH TOWARDS EARTH.
"OUR HOMES.
"OUR FAMILIES.
"OUR FUTURES.


"IT FALLS ON US TO STOP IT.


"TO STAND AGAINST THIS UNSTOPPABLE FORCE.
"I CANNOT SAY IF WE WILL LIVE BEYOND THIS FOE.
"I KNOW ONLY ONE THING WITH CERTAINTY...
"THE AVENGERS WILL ASSEMBLE AND WE WILL TRY."
WAR MACHINE, THE PHOENIX CAGE WILL ONLY WORK IN CLOSE PROXIMITY.
YOU'RE WILLING TO BET MY ASS THAT THIS ARMOR CAN WITHSTAND IT, McCOY?
I DO BET YOUR ASS, JAMES. PROVIDED THOR CAN HOLD ITS FOCUS.
I WILL NOT FAIL.


COME, CHAOS BRINGER-- TEST THE METTLE OF THOR!
GO NOW-- WHILE THOR HOLDS IT BACK!
IF THIS DOESN'T WORK I'M GONNA HAVE VALKYRIE DRAG MY GHOST ASS BACK TO SMACK YOU, McCOY!
FORTUNATELY THAT'S NOT HOW VALKYRIE'S POWERS WORK, JAMES.
MIGHT NOT BE A PROBLEM...
I THINK--I-IT'S WORKING!
THE BEAST IS RILED! I CANNOT--
GHRGHAHH!
RRAHOOOOOOOSH
YERAGHH!
THOR AND WAR MACHINE ARE DOWN! GET THEM OUT OF THERE!
DIVERT ALL POWER TO COOLING!
GHRAGH-- BURNING UP!
BEAST, WAR MACHINE'S ARMOR IS TOO BADLY DAMAGED TO POWER THE PHOENIX CAGE!
EVERYONE PULL BACK!
WE'LL REPAIR THE ARMOR-- TRY AGAIN LATER.
LATER MIGHT BE AFTER THIS THING'S DESTROYED ANOTHER PLANET! I HAVE ANOTHER PLAN, BEAST...

...I'M GOING IN.
BRIAN, STOP-- LISTEN TO ME!
THE CAGE WAS CALIBRATED FOR WAR MACHINE'S POWER SUPPLY. WE DON'T KNOW HOW IT WILL REACT TO A MAGIC-BASED ENERGY SOURCE!
THOR'S HORRIBLY INJURED!
WHAT IS OUR PLAN?!
WHAT ARE WE--
SHHRWOOOOOOOM
GATHER THE WOUNDED AND RETREAT!
THAT'S AN ORDER, DAMMIT!
WE MUST MOVE FORWARD.
NO! FALL BACK-- REGROUP--
WE WON'T GET A SECOND CHANCE AT THIS.

DISCONNECT! YOU'RE NOT GENERATING ENOUGH POWER TO MAINTAIN THE CAGE'S INTEGRITY!
DISCONNECT BEFORE--
GHRAGHH!
THWOOM
THE DEATHGLOW SURROUNDS US ALL.
OUR BID IS CAST.
WE TRIED, ODINSON...
...YET FAILED.
NO. WE STOOD TALL AGAINST THE TERRIBLE STORM...
"...I DIE PROUDLY AT YOUR SIDES."
M'KRAAN CRYSTAL AMPLIFICATION IS ACTIVE.
THE DOORWAY OPENS.

BY ODIN, SOME LUCK!
WHAT HAPPENED?! WHERE DID IT GO?
NO IDEA BUT I'LL BET ONE THING...
"...WHEN WE FIND OUT WE WON'T LIKE IT."
MAR-VELL.
FALLEN CHAMPION.
HOPE OF ALL KREE.
THE DREAM IS NOW.
BEGIN YOUR CHANTS.

PREPARE YOURSELVES!
MAINTAIN YOUR FOCUS!
COME, TERRIBLE SERAPH.
THE KREE CALL YOU.
WE WILL BE REBORN IN YOUR GRACE.
THIS IS NOT A MISSION OF OUR CHOOSING.
WE ARE TOOLS OF COSMIC WILL.
OUR DESIRE IS THE DESIRE OF ALL.
WE ARE INSTRUCTED BY THE UNIVERSE TO LIGHT THE WAY TO YOUR RIGHTFUL GOAL.
"USHERING YOU FORWARD.

"WILLING SERVANTS TO THE LORDS OF INFINITY."
EVERYONE HAS GATHERED, MINISTER.
AS IF THEY HAD A CHOICE.
I SERVE YOUR WILL, MINISTER.
AS IF YOU HAVE A CHOICE.

KREE BROTHERS AND SISTERS-- *REJOICE!*
THE HOUR OF ASCENSION IS UPON US...
"...THE PHOENIX COMES TO HALA!"
HALA IS OUR ONLY OPTION.
WE HAVE WOUNDED TO CARE FOR AND MUST CONSERVE POWER.
THE KREE WILL REACT WITH HOSTILITY.
WE HAVE STEALTH SHIELDS. THEY WON'T DETECT US.
NOH-VARR, PERHAPS YOU COULD PERSUADE THE LOCALS TO AID US?
I AM FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION. THERE IS NO ONE ON THIS HALA WHO KNOWS ME.
BUT IT IS STILL MY *HOME*...
"...AT THE VERY LEAST I CAN SHOW YOU A GOOD PLACE TO *HIDE*."

WHERE DO WE STAND, VISION?
THOR WILL RECOVER. HIS INJURIES ARE SEVERE--BUT HE IS A *GOD.*
AND WHAT OF JAMES?
AND WHAT ABOUT *YOU,* MR. BRADDOCK? DID YOU SUSTAIN *ANY* INJURIES WHILE PROPELLING YOURSELF HEADLONG INTO THE PHOENIX FORCE STRAPPED TO THE *ONLY DEVICE* CAPABLE OF POTENTIALLY CONTAINING IT?
YOU WEREN'T THERE--YOU WOULD'VE MADE THE SAME CALL.
I WOULD NOT HAVE BECAUSE IT WAS STUPID.
I WAS WONDERING WHEN WE'D FINALLY SEE *CLASSIC* BRIAN BRADDOCK EMERGE FROM THIS PERFECT HERO YOU'VE BEEN TRYING TO SELL.
BEAST, PERHAPS--
HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHY YOU'VE *NEVER* PLAYED A ROLE IN THE BIGGER PICTURE, BRIAN?
EVER WONDERED WHY YOU, ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL HUMANS IN THE UNIVERSE, ARE *SELDOM* CALLED UPON TO HELP?
IT'S BECAUSE OF THIS. IT'S BECAUSE OF *RIGHT NOW.*
IT'S BECAUSE WHILE WE'VE ALWAYS NEEDED YOUR STRENGTH, WE CAN DO WITHOUT A HOT-REACTOR WHO THINKS HE KNOWS BETTER THAN EVERYONE ELSE.

"...AND NOW YOUR ARROGANCE HAS DOOMED US ALL."
WHEN I WAS A BOY I'D WATCH THE SUNS OF RAV'EL SET AND I'D DREAM OF LEAVING HALA, TO SEE THE OTHER WORLDS IN MY GALAXY, AND BEYOND.
YOU CAN SAFELY CHECK OFF "TRAVEL" FROM YOUR "TO-DO" LIST, NOH-VARR.
IT FEELS BETTER TO BE HOME THAN I IMAGINED.
MY CHEST SWELLS WITH KREE PRIDE. MY HEART POUNDS STRONG ON HALA'S SOIL.
MY ANCESTRY... THE DEAD HERE ARE DREAMING, I CAN HEAR THEM.
REMINDING ME THAT THE HUMANS KILLED EVERYONE I LOVED.
THEY CALLED US HERE. CALLED US HOME.
TO HELP IN THE ASCENSION... SOMEHOW I... I *KNEW.*
THEN YOU ALSO KNOW THE PHOENIX IS COMING *HERE.*
YES. I DO.
THEN YOU KNOW WHAT WE MUST DO TO HONOR THE ENERGIES OF THIS WORLD THAT SURGE THROUGH US.
YES.
SPEAK IT ALOUD, SO THAT I KNOW WE ARE BOTH DISCUSSING THE SAME THING.
WE MUST ENSURE NOTHING STOP THE PHOENIX... *BY ANY MEANS.*
I'M GLAD TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT, CAROL...

IF WE ARE TO SUCCEED I'LL NEED YOUR HELP.
IF WE ARE TO SUCCEED WE MUST KILL THE AVENGERS.
TO BE CONTINUED...

MARVEL
27
A vs X
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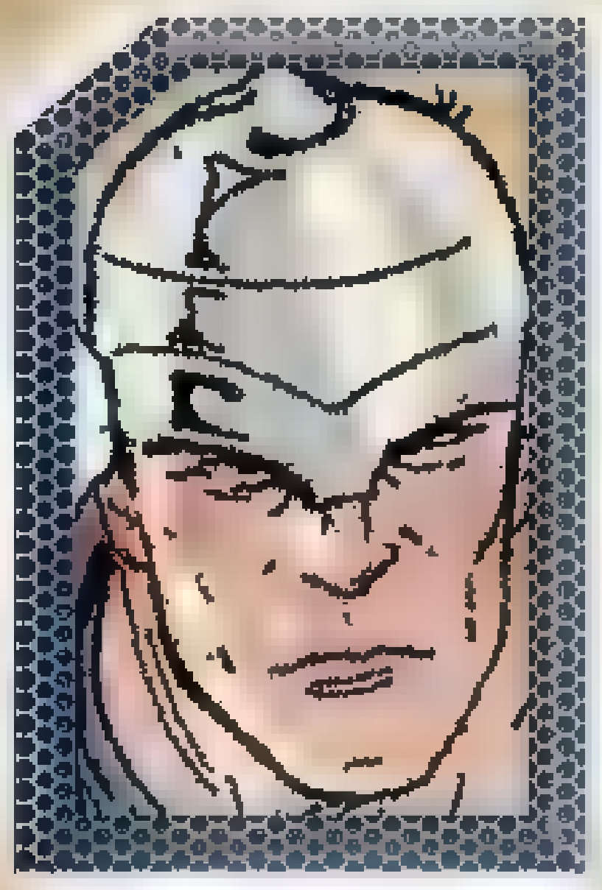
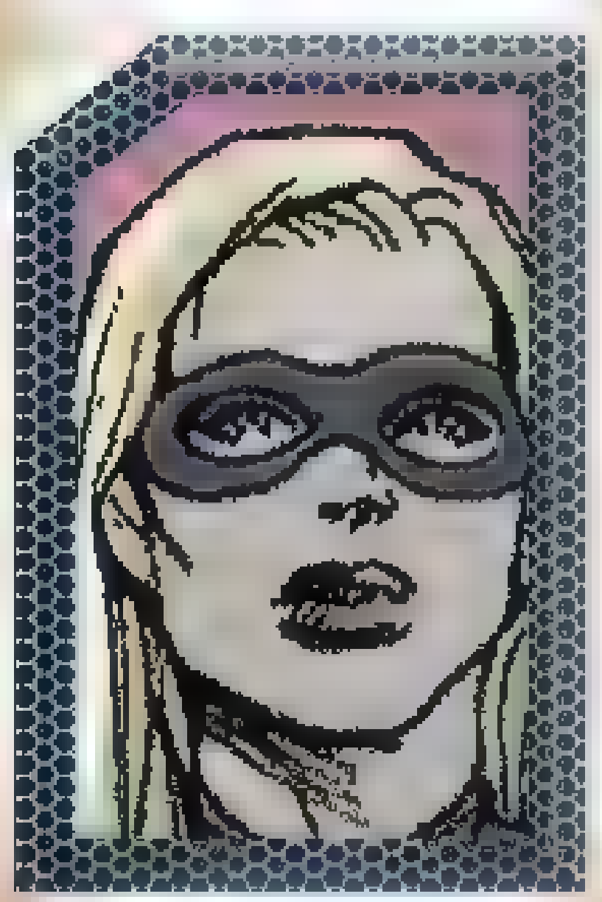
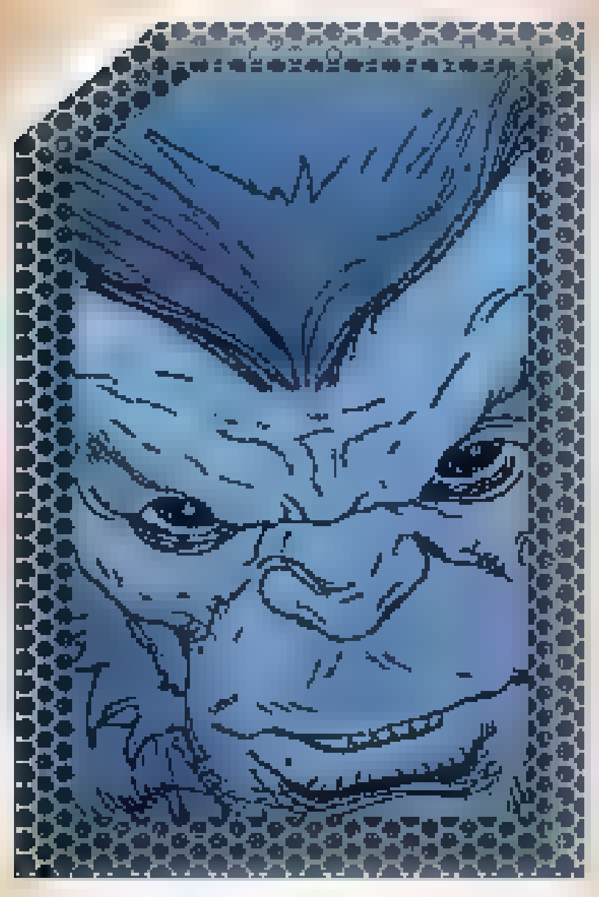
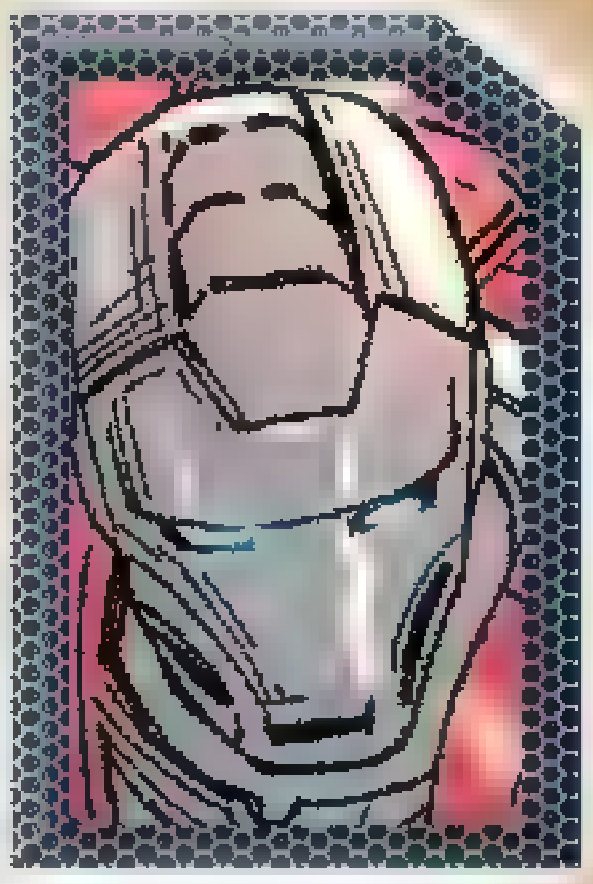
SECRET AVENGERS

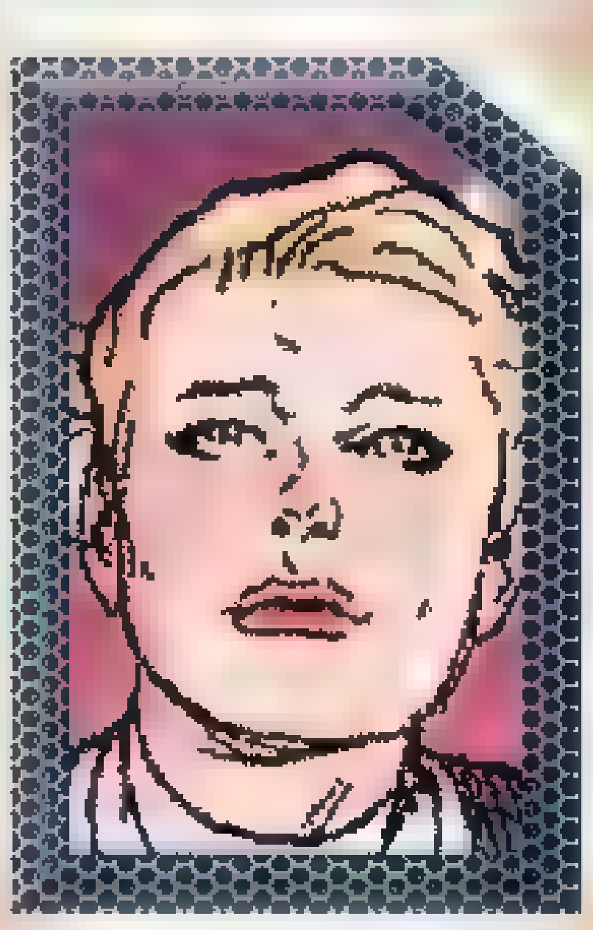

THOR

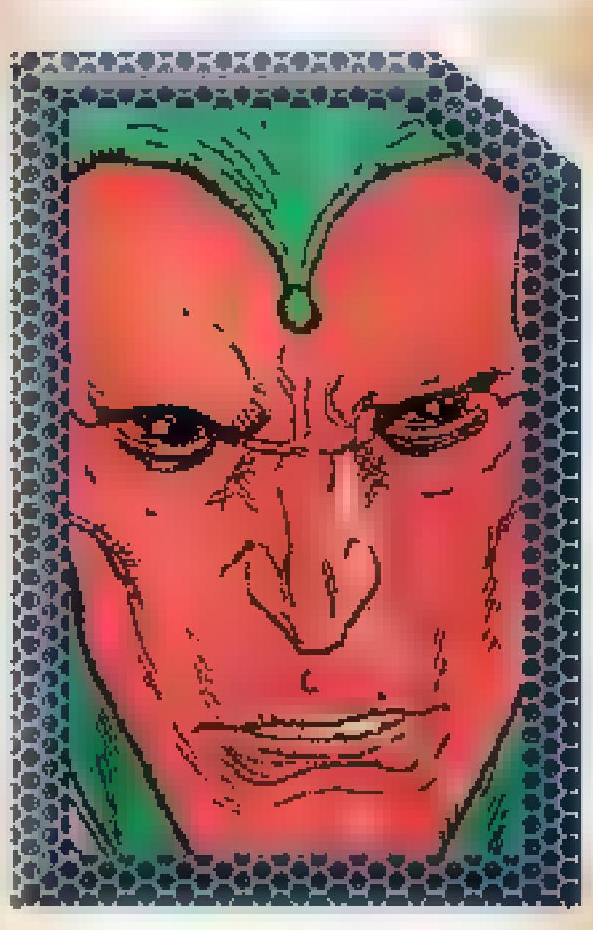

MS. MARVEL

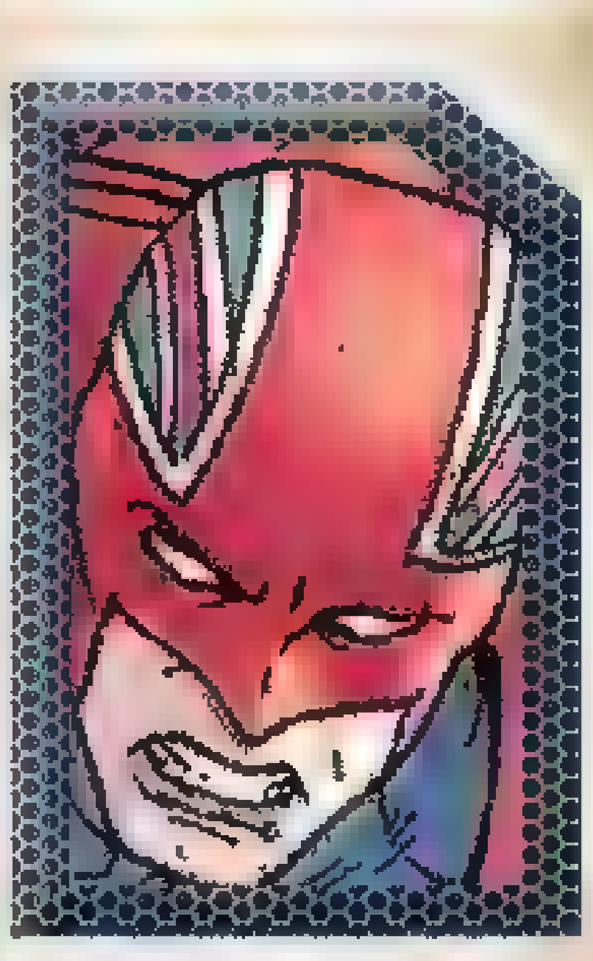

BEAST

PROTECTOR


WAR MACHINE

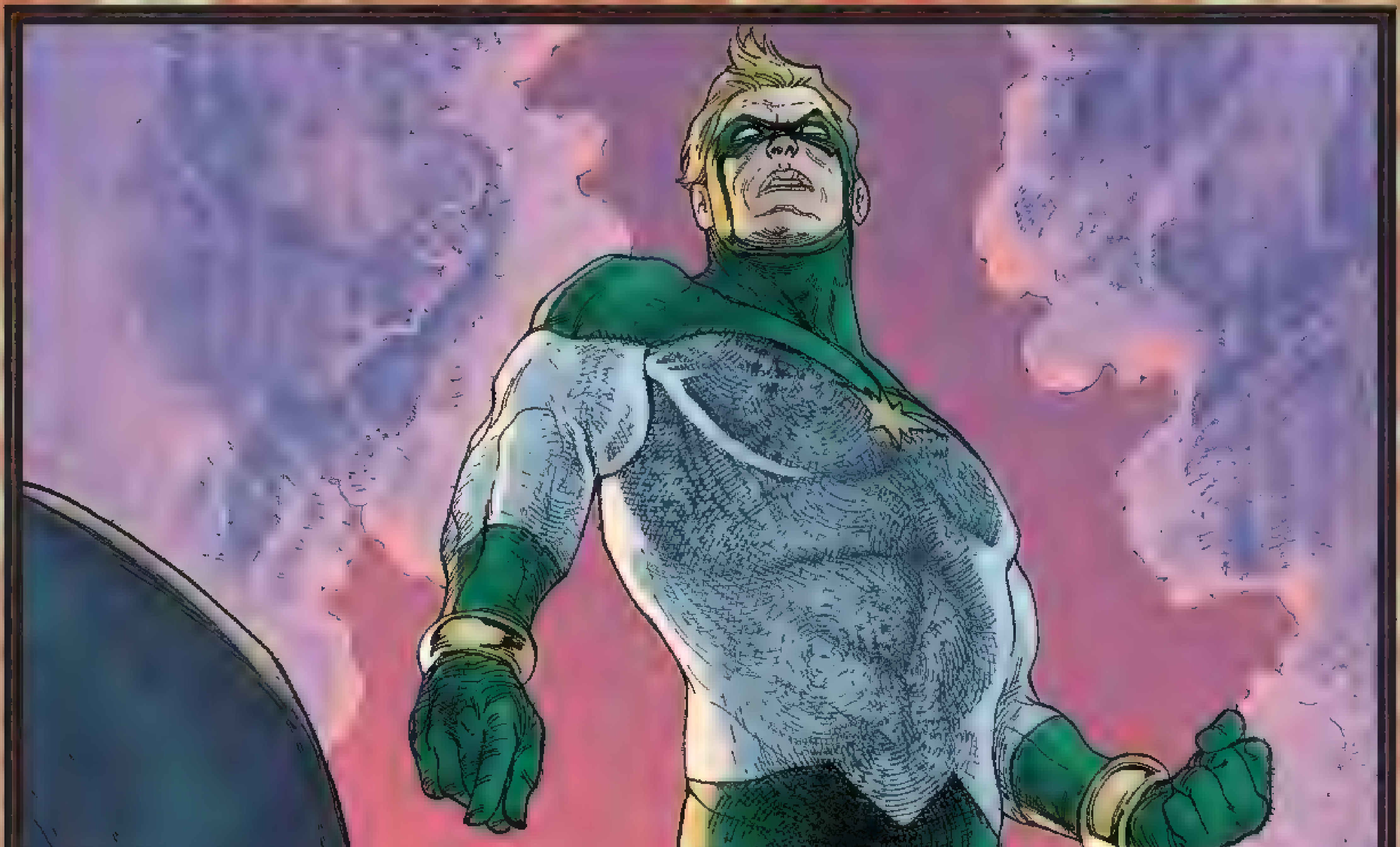

VALKYRIE


VISION


CAPTAIN BRITAIN

THE WORLD-CONSUMING COSMIC PHOENIX FORCE IS HEADING FOR EARTH. AFTER A FAILED ATTEMPT TO CONTAIN IT, THE SECRET AVENGERS SET DOWN ON HALA, HOMEWORLD OF THE ALIEN KREE, TO TEND TO THEIR WOUNDED AND MAKE REPAIRS. JAMES RHODES, A.K.A. WAR MACHINE, IS IN CRITICAL CONDITION.

MEANWHILE, A FACTION OF THE KREE HAVE USED A PORTION OF THE PHOENIX'S POWER TO RESURRECT THEIR LONG-DEAD CHAMPION AND FORMER AVENGER CAPTAIN MARVEL. THEY HAVE ALSO USED THE SAME TECHNOLOGY TO SUMMON THE PHOENIX TO HALA, IN AN ATTEMPT TO EVOLVE THEIR RACE. APPEARING BEFORE MS. MARVEL AND PROTECTOR, BOTH EMPOWERED BY KREE TECHNOLOGY, CAPTAIN MARVEL RECRUITED THEM FOR HIS CAUSE: TO KILL THE AVENGERS.



NOTE: THIS STORY TAKES PLACE BEFORE THE EVENTS OF AVENGERS #26-27

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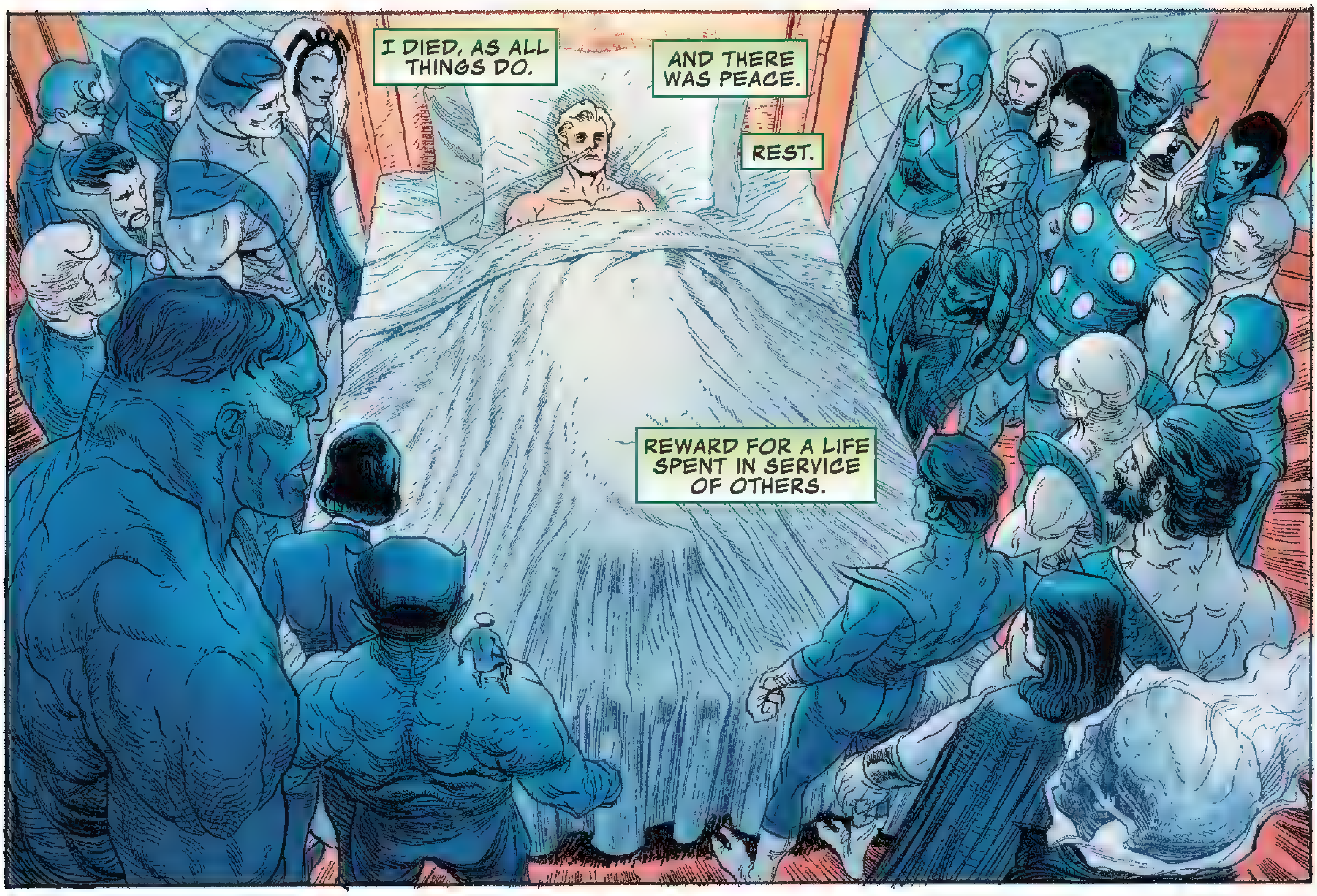
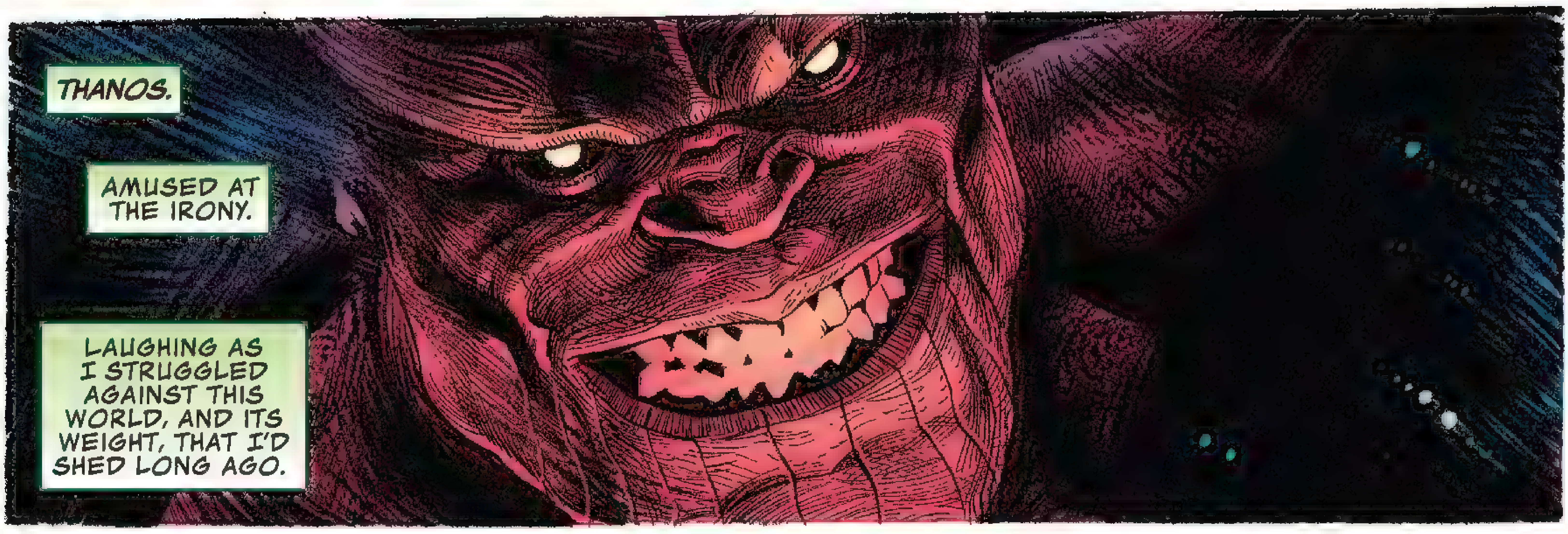

I DIED, AS ALL THINGS DO.
AND THERE WAS PEACE.
REST.
REWARD FOR A LIFE SPENT IN SERVICE OF OTHERS.

I DIDN'T MISS LIFE.

THE FIERY HANDS THAT DREW ME FORTH WERE NOT OF MY CHOOSING.

AND ALL THE WHILE--HE WAS LAUGHING.

LAUGHING AT ME.

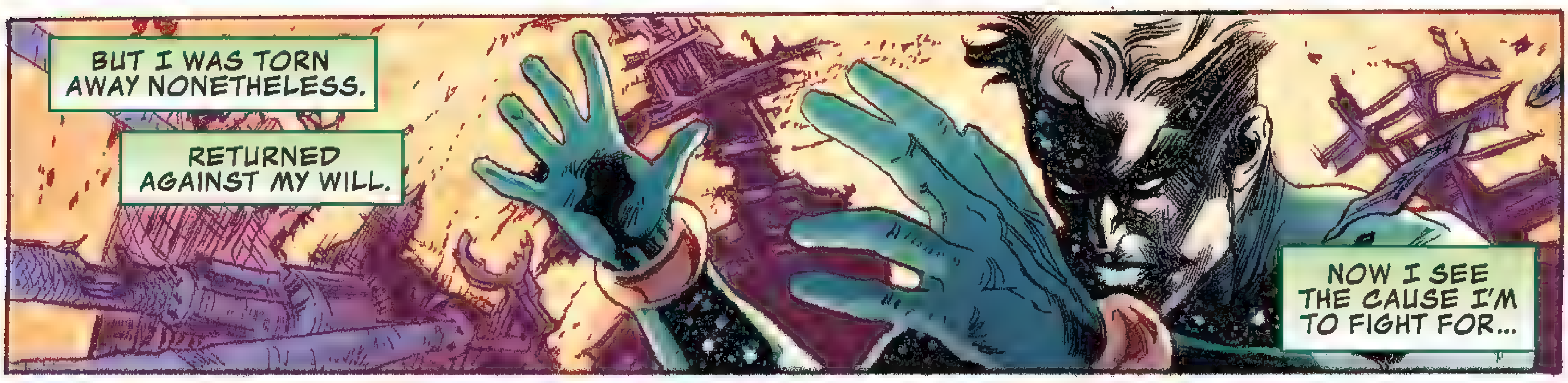

THANOS.
AMUSED AT THE IRONY.
LAUGHING AS I STRUGGLED AGAINST THIS WORLD, AND ITS WEIGHT, THAT I'D SHED LONG AGO.

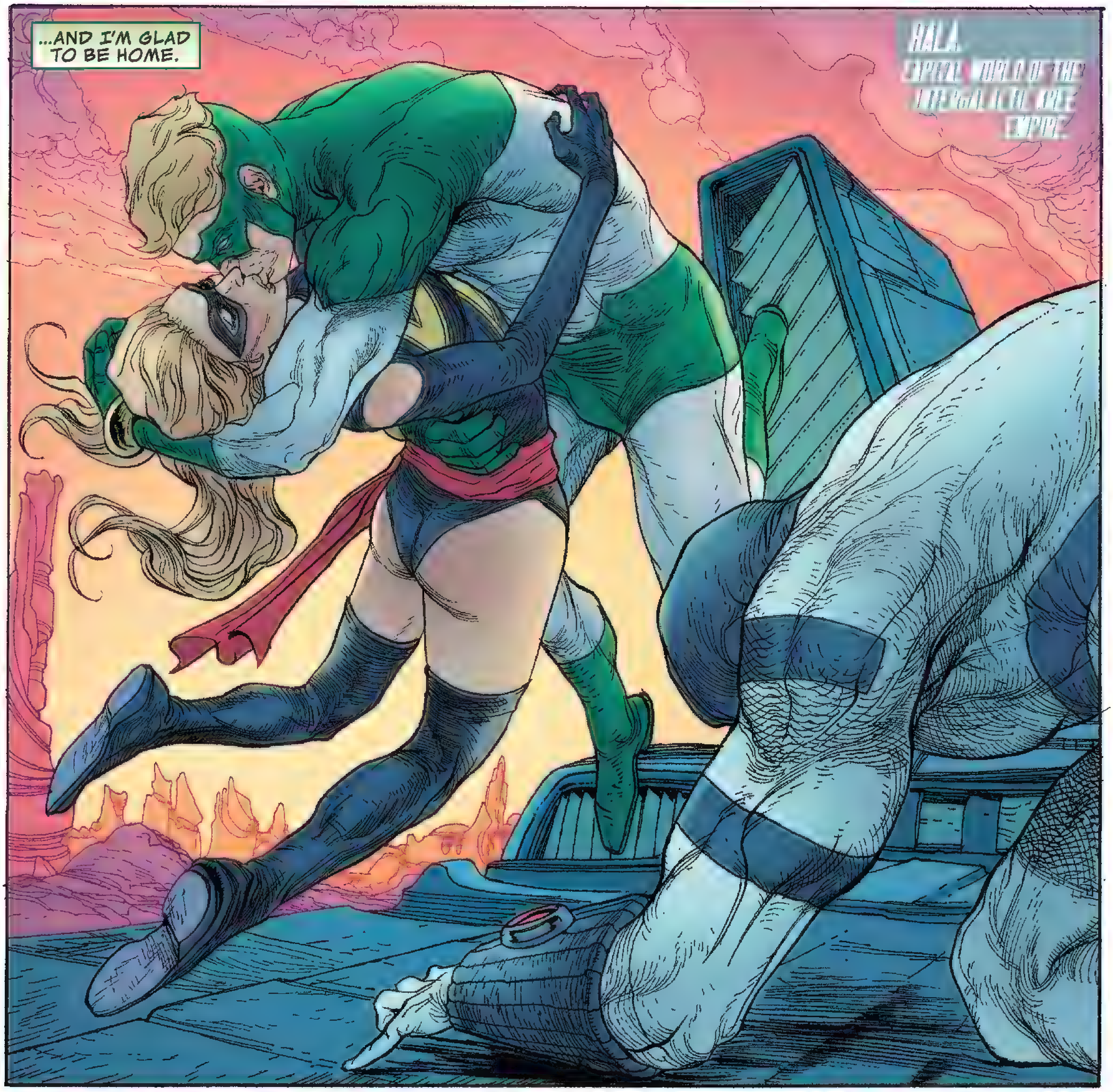
RESTLESS THANOS.

SUFFOCATED BY THE WEIGHT OF HIS UNFINISHED BUSINESS HERE, ALWAYS CHEATING HIS LOVER DEATH TO FIND A RETURN.

A SELF-INFLICTED TORTURE.

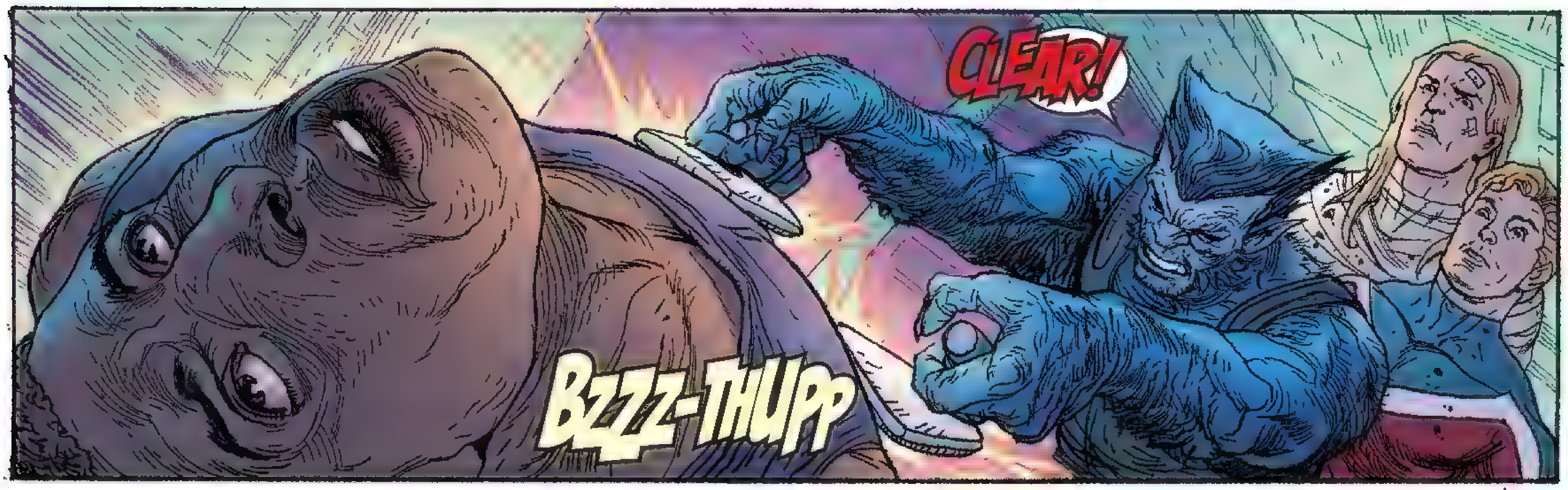
NOT ONE I SUFFERED FROM.


BUT I WAS TORN AWAY NONETHELESS.
RETURNED AGAINST MY WILL.
NOW I SEE THE CAUSE I'M TO FIGHT FOR...


...AND I'M GLAD TO BE HOME.
HALA, CAPITAL WORLD OF THE INTERGALACTIC KREE EMPIRE.

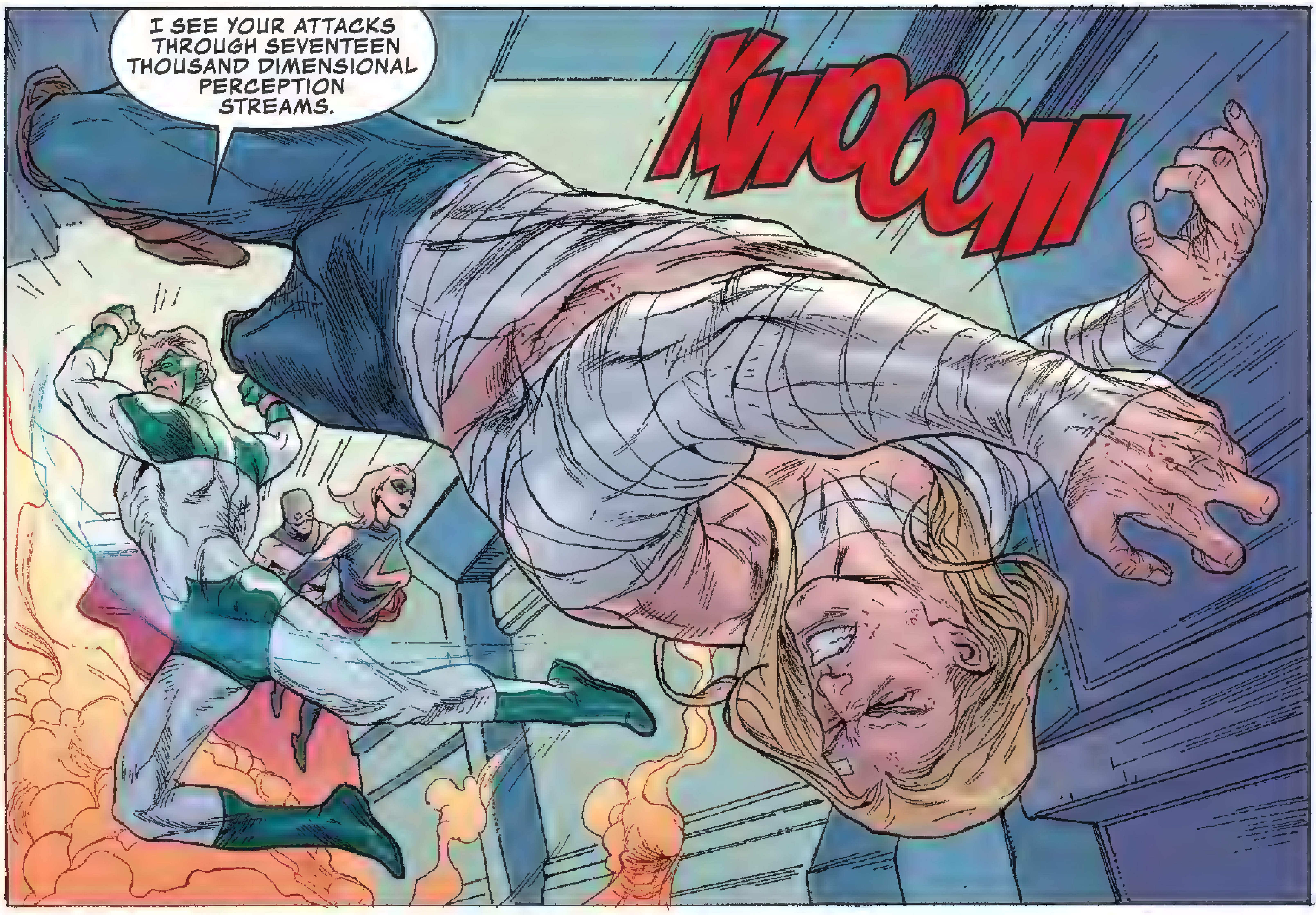
SECRET AVENGERS: OPERATION PHOENIX

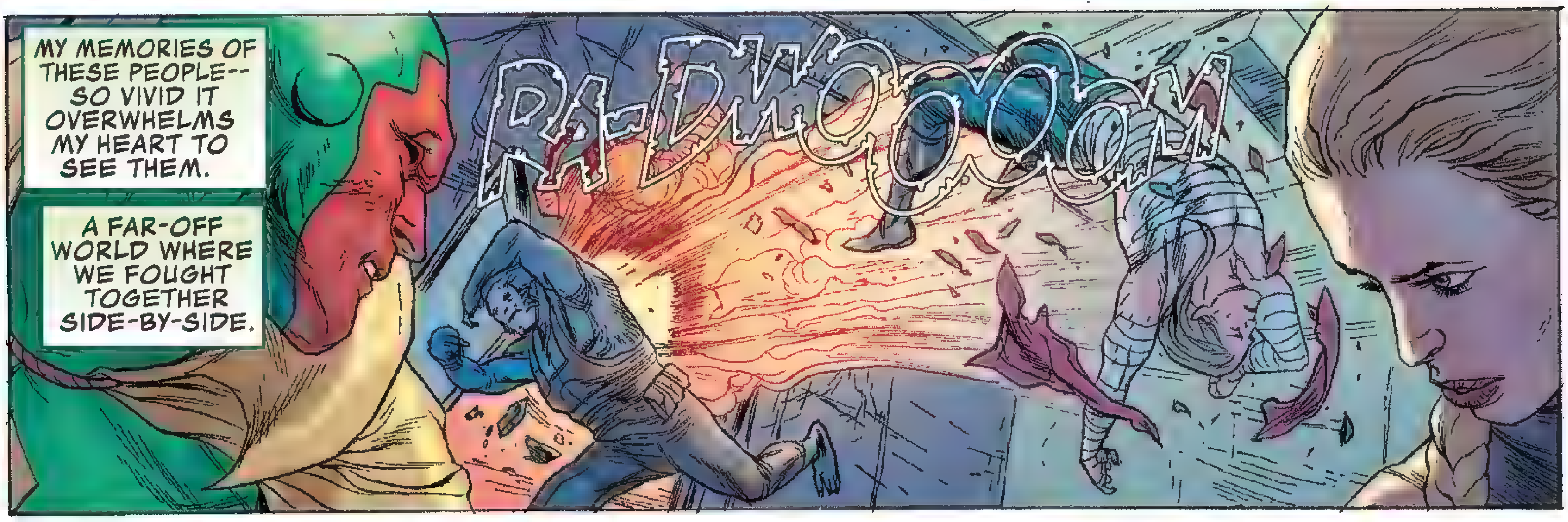
PART 2 SACRED GROUND

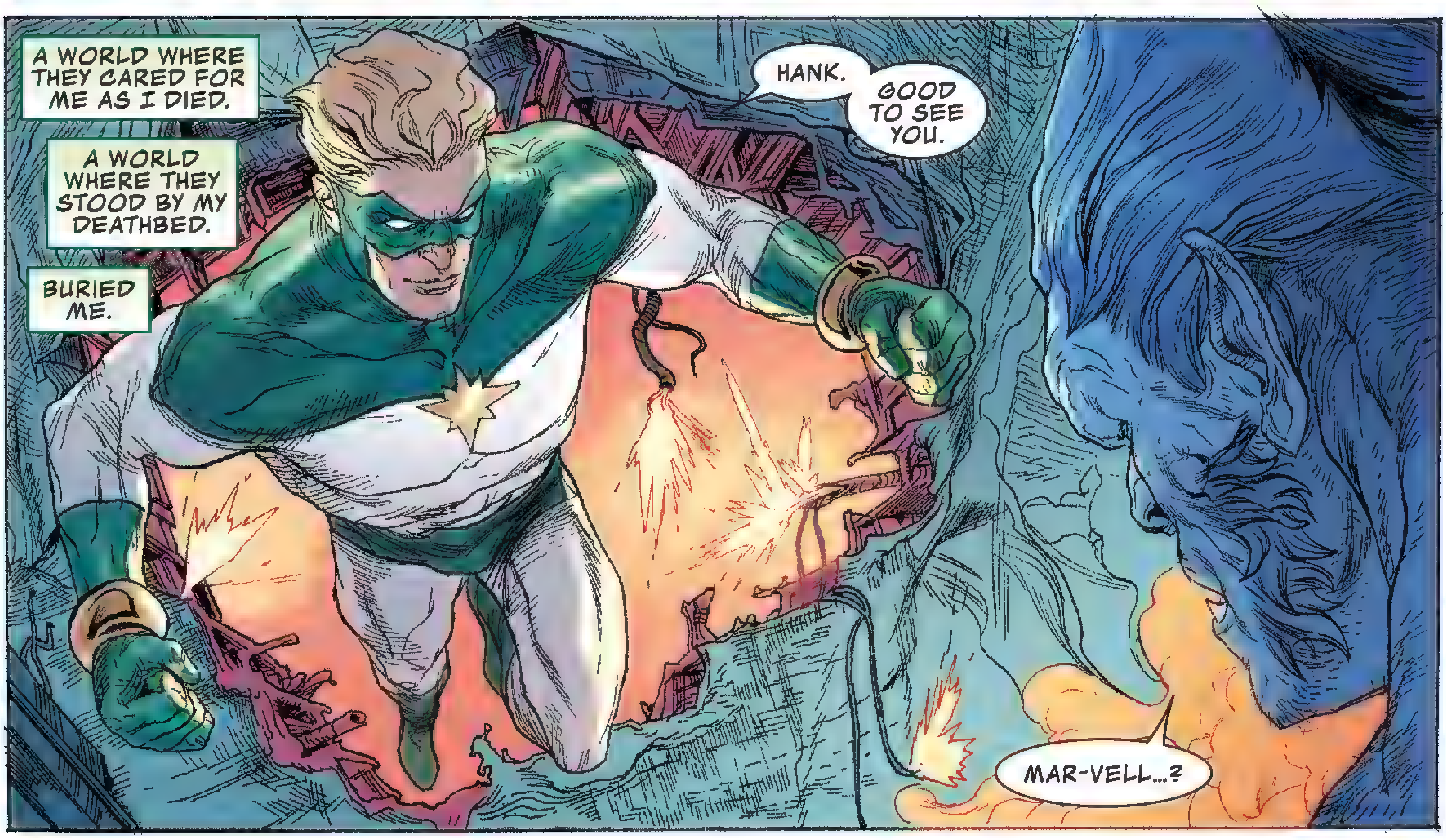

CLEAR!
BZZZ-THUPP

C'MON, JAMES...C'MON-- *YES!*
THERE YOU GO!
HE'S STABLE.
FOR NOW.
FINE WORK, McCOY.
YEAH...
...FORTUNATELY NOT ALL OF US ARE *INCOMPETENT.*
BRADDOCK! YOU DID WHAT YOU THOUGHT WAS RIGHT IN THE FACE OF A TERRIBLE FOE.
I DERAILED THE MISSION.
LOST MY *CONFIDENCE,* AND WITH IT MY POWER.
DAMN MERLYN AND *DAMN* HIS TEST...
YOU KNOW WHO HAS TOTAL CONFIDENCE? *THE BAD GUYS.*
EVERY *PIG* INTENT ON DOMINATION, THEY'RE ALWAYS SO *BLOODY* CONFIDENT.
ENOUGH MEWLING. YOUR CHALLENGE IS TO LISTEN TO YOUR HEART, BRADDOCK--NOT CHANGE ITS FABRIC.
SEE YOURSELF FOR WHAT YOU ARE-- **A NOBLE MAN.**
ONCE YOU DO, ONCE YOU SEE THAT...
...THERE IS *NOTHING* IN THE HEAVENS THAT CAN MATCH YOUR STRENGTH.

THWOOOM
HYERGH--!
MY SENSES BLAZE.
MY PERCEPTION OF TIME SLOWS DOWN AS...
COSMIC AWARENESS AWAKENS.
A CHOIR SINGING. REMINDING ME...
"PROTECT THE LAND THAT GREW YOU."
BY THE ALL-FATHER'S EYE--CAPTAIN MAR-VELL--
THE CHOIR PERFORATES MY ANXIETY.
YOU HAVE CHOSEN UNWISELY THE FORM OF YOUR DECEPTION, DOG!
YOUR AWARENESS IS SO VERY FLAT, A SLUG PLODDING THROUGH THE MUD OF SPACE-TIME.
THIS IS MY CHANCE TO PRIORITIZE THE KREE PEOPLE OVER THE HUMANS--
BY KILLING THESE FOREIGNERS.
YOU WILL SUFFER FOR THIS FOUL DISRESPECT!

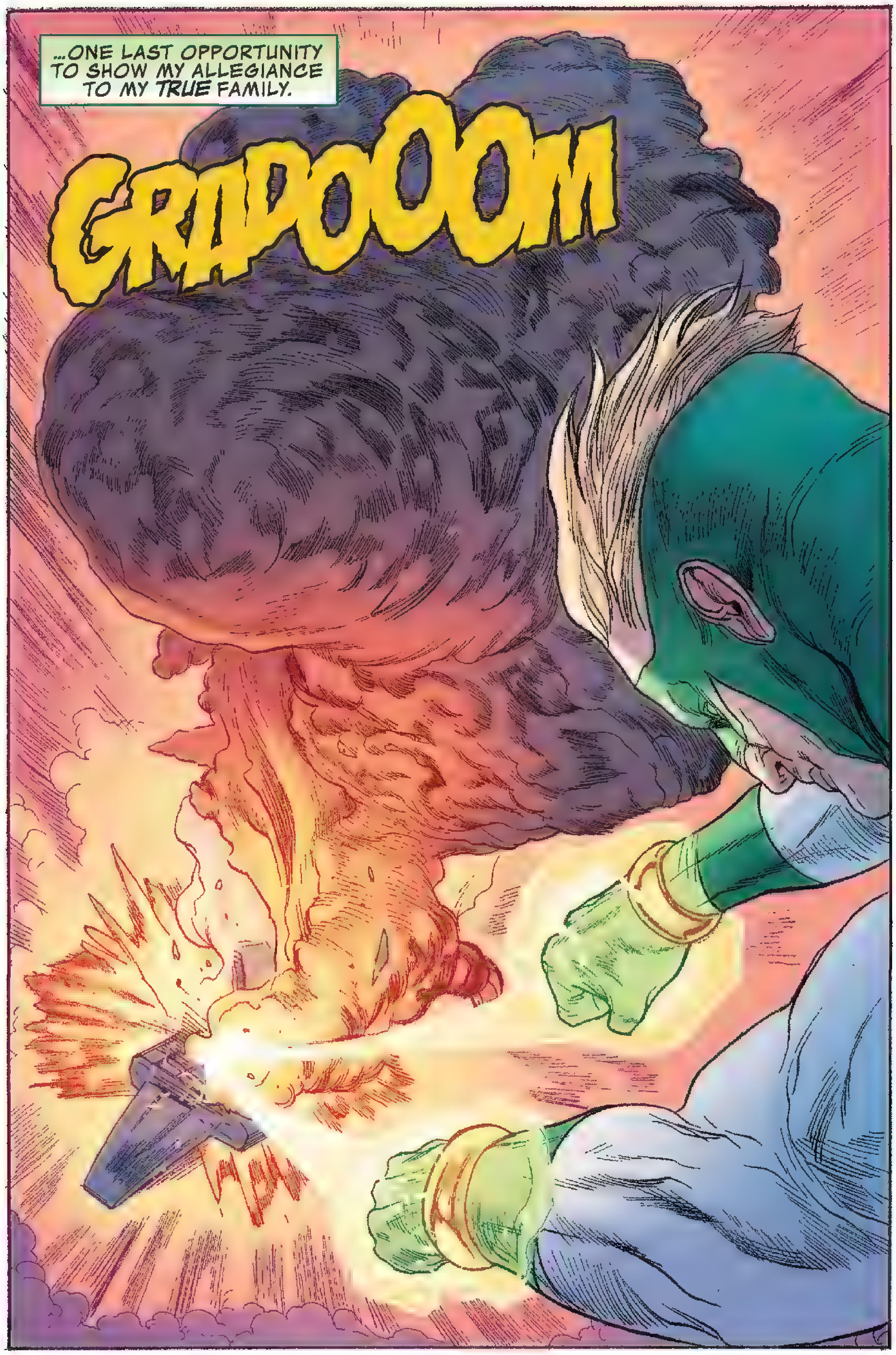

I SEE YOUR ATTACKS THROUGH SEVENTEEN THOUSAND DIMENSIONAL PERCEPTION STREAMS.
KWOOOM

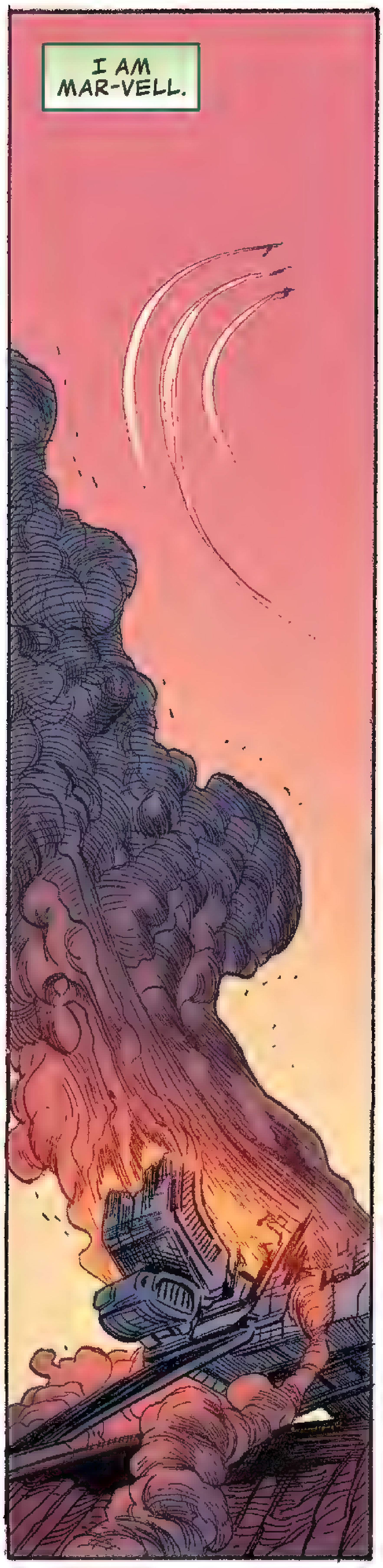

MY MEMORIES OF THESE PEOPLE-- SO VIVID IT OVERWHELMS MY HEART TO SEE THEM.
A FAR-OFF WORLD WHERE WE FOUGHT TOGETHER SIDE-BY-SIDE.
RA-DWOOOOOM

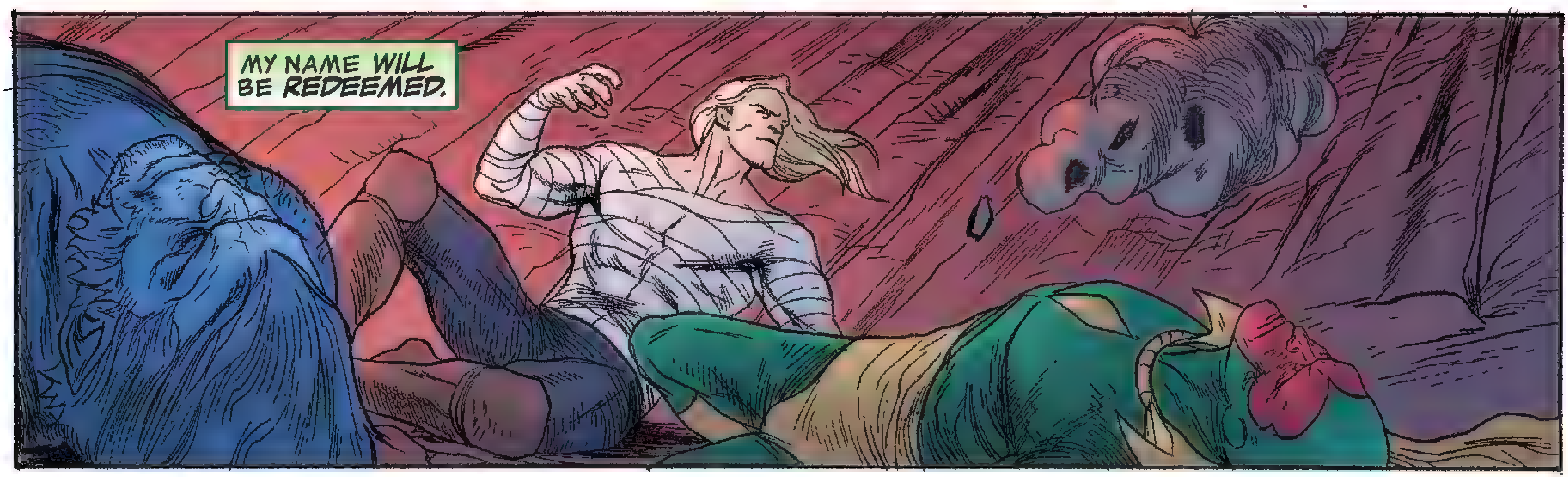

A WORLD WHERE THEY CARED FOR ME AS I DIED.
A WORLD WHERE THEY STOOD BY MY DEATHBED.
BURIED ME.
HANK.
GOOD TO SEE YOU.
MAR-VELL...?

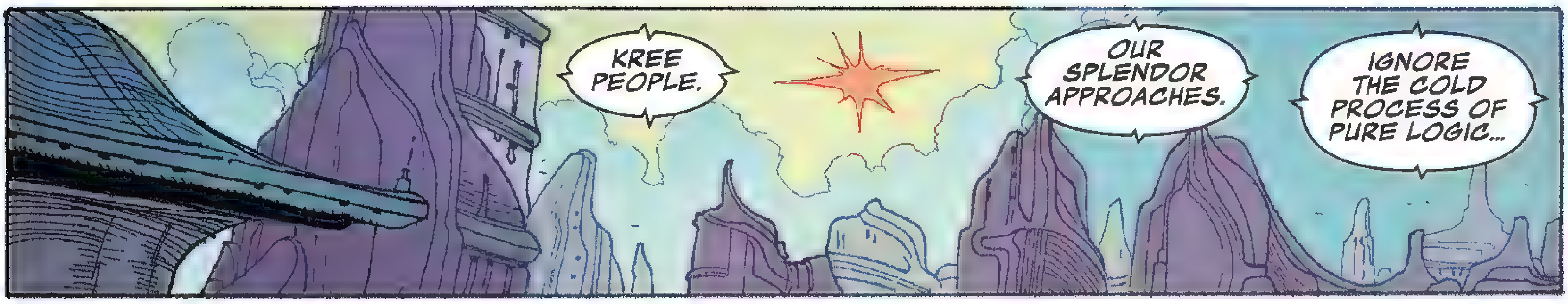
ON THAT WORLD THEY WERE GOOD PEOPLE.
GOOD TO OTHER HUMANS.
NO.
BUT ALWAYS AGAINST THE KREE.
BLAZZAT
I STILL REMEMBER YOU SLAVING DAY AND NIGHT TO CURE MY CANCER...
WHATEVER YOUR TRUE INTENTIONS--YOU'VE EARNED A CLEAN DEATH.
YOU INHABIT THE BODY OF MY FORMER ALLY...
...BUT YOUR MIND IS CLEARLY BROKEN.
GHRAGH!
I CLEARLY SEE YOU TRESPASSING IN MY HOMELAND, VISION.
AND YOUR DENSITY-MANIPULATION CANNOT STOP ME!
GLAZAAT
GHA--

CAROL-- NOH-VARR-- WHAT IS THIS MADNESS?!
NOT MADNESS, VALKYRIE...
...LOYALTY.
TWOK
GATHER THE WEAK AND INJURED. THE MINISTER HAS REQUESTED A PUBLIC DISPLAY.
AND THE OTHERS?
TOO POWERFUL TO RISK.
GIVE THE ORDERS.
MOVE THROUGH THIS.
NOW IS MY TEST...


...ONE LAST OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW MY ALLEGIANCE TO MY *TRUE* FAMILY.
GRADOOOM


I AM MAR-VELL.


MY NAME *WILL* BE *REDEEMED.*


KREE PEOPLE.
OUR SPLENDOR APPROACHES.
IGNORE THE COLD PROCESS OF PURE LOGIC...

...INSTEAD, LISTEN NOW TO YOUR **HEARTS**.
TRUST IN YOUR **SUPREME INTELLIGENCE**.
TRUST IN OUR GREATEST HERO, RETURNED IN THIS HOUR OF OUR NEED TO REDEEM HIS PAST BETRAYALS...
MAR-VELL, TRUE SON OF HALA.
STRENGTH ENOUGH TO BEND DEATH'S GRIP.
STRENGTH ENOUGH TO ENSURE THE KREE GRASP THEIR RIGHTFUL PLACE AS LORDS OF THE COSMOS.
ALREADY MAR-VELL HAS STAVED OFF AN INVASION OF HUMAN INTERLOPERS DETERMINED TO REDIRECT THE PHOENIX TO THEIR OWN WORLD AND STEAL THE KREE DESTINY.
THE EXECUTION OF THE SURVIVORS WILL BE TRANSMITTED TO ALL WORLDS, ITS MESSAGE CLEAR--
THE KREE ASCENSION IS NOW AND THOSE WHO STAND IN ITS WAY WILL **FALL**.
THE KREE ASCENSION IS NOW...

...AND THOSE WHO STAND IN ITS WAY WILL FALL.
WE ARE IN TERRIBLE DANGER.
HAVE YOU LOCATED OUR COMPANIONS?
HAVE THESE KREE DOGS BEGUN EVACUATIONS YET?
NO.
THEY WELCOME THE PHOENIX'S ARRIVAL.
SOMETHING IS AMISS.
SINCE OUR ARRIVAL I'VE DETECTED A DULL HUM IN MY BINARY LIMBIC SYSTEM AND AUDITORY CORTEX.
I'VE BEEN UNABLE TO DECIPHER IT.
IT MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE INSANITY I'M DETECTING ALL OVER HALA NOW.
BUT IT WON'T MATTER.
THE PHOENIX WILL BE HERE IN A MATTER OF HOURS...
"...AND THE KREE WELCOME THEIR DOOM WITH OPEN ARMS."
UGH... WH-WHERE THE HELL...
RELAX, JAMES. WE'RE ON HALA...IN PRISON.
YOUR INJURIES ARE SEVERE AND YOU MUST NOT DISLODGE McCOY'S SUTURES.

W-WHERE'S MY WAR MACHINE ARMOR?
IN THE WRECKAGE OF THE QUINJET.
WRECKED QUINJET, TRAPPED IN PRISON, AND YOU LOST MY ARMOR?
AND THEY PLAN TO EXECUTE US.
SOON. AND THE PHOENIX IS HEADED HERE.
WOW. I MEAN... WOW.
I REALLY THOUGHT A SUICIDE MISSION TO FIGHT THE DAMNED PHOENIX FORCE WAS AS BAD AS THINGS COULD GET.
"YOU ALL SOMEHOW MANAGED TO MAKE THINGS WORSE."
I'M HAVING A DIFFICULT TIME PROCESSING THIS.
IN MY HEART I STILL FEEL THE FEAR OF DYING.
AS IF NO TIME AT ALL HAS GONE BY FROM THE MOMENT OF MY PASSING TO NOW.
I CAN'T BEGIN TO IMAGINE.
ALL YOU'VE TOLD ME...IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO GRASP HOW MUCH TIME HAS ELAPSED.
AND...YOUR CANCER?
PRESERVED. MY COSMIC AWARENESS CONFIRMS IT.

THE POWER OF THE PHOENIX SURGES THROUGH ME.
IT'S FROZEN THE CANCER *INERT.*
I'M NOT GOING TO LEAVE YOU AGAIN.
I'M GOING TO BE FINE, CAROL.
WE ALL ARE.
TINK
THE TAPES YOU RECORDED BEFORE YOU DIED...
I LISTENED TO THEM A THOUSAND TIMES.
YOUR VOICE...IT *HAUNTED* ME.
YOU WERE SO CONCERNED THAT WHO YOU WERE WOULD BE WASHED AWAY BY TIME.
THAT NO ONE'S HEART WOULD HOLD YOU.
BEING FORGOTTEN TERRIFIED YOU MORE THAN DEATH ITSELF.

THE TAPES WERE A VANITY.
I WANTED SOMEONE TO REMEMBER ME, REMEMBER MORE THAN A WARRIOR...
...BUT THE MAN I WAS.
I REMEMBERED. LISTENED TO THOSE TAPES A HUNDRED TIMES TO MAKE SURE.
I ALWAYS LOVED YOU AS A DEAR FRIEND...
...BUT NOW...

WHILE I'M CONFIDENT I CAN COUNTER THIS STRANGE BROADCAST, IT WILL ONLY BE IN A LIMITED AREA AROUND ME.
BAH. PERHAPS MJOLNIR IS THE BETTER SOLUTION.
⁝SIGH⁝ YES, GO BEAT THE MIND CONTROL OUT OF THE KREE POPULATION, THOR.
THE BROADCAST IS BEYOND MERE MIND CONTROL.
IT IS A COMPLEX CODE WITH SPECIFIC SUBLIMINAL INSTRUCTIONS, KEYED TO THE GENOTYPE OF THE KREE.
AND EVEN IF WE DO FREE THE KREE PEOPLE AND SOMEHOW DIVERT THE PHOENIX, IT WILL RETURN TO ITS ORIGINAL TRAJECTORY--
TOWARDS EARTH.
IF WE FAIL, HALA WILL BE DESTROYED.
SO WE NEED TO CONVINCE A PLANET OF BRAINWASHED KREE TO EVACUATE IN THE NEXT HOUR? EASY ENOUGH.
WHAT OF MAR-VELL AND OUR COMPANIONS?
THE SITUATION IS TOO DIRE FOR COMPROMISE.
IF YOU CANNOT FREE THEIR MINDS, IF THEY STAND AGAINST US...
...WE WILL DO WHAT IS NECESSARY.

DO YOU SEE NOW, JAL-HA?
YES.
WHAT IS IT, FATHER?
THE BIRD TRAVELS THE COSMOS, BRINGING EVOLUTION TO THE WORTHY.
IT WILL GIVE US ALL NEW STRENGTH AND--
KREE CITIZENS...
...YOU ARE IN GREAT PERIL.
HEAR MY WORDS. LET THEM DISPEL THE TERRIBLE LIE IN YOUR MINDS.
EVACUATE NOW, BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY, OR DIE.
WE WILL LIBERATE OTHERS AS BEST WE CAN--
--MY, SON, WHERE IS--
HE'S RIGHT! HOW HAVE I BEEN--
OUT OF MY WAY--
--ALL GOING TO DIE!

SHRAKOOOOM
RHA--!
I UNDERESTIMATED YOU.
NEVER AGAIN.
KRAKOOOOM
COME PEACEFULLY, BEAST.
YOU WILL NOT LIKE THE ALTERNATIVE.

I'M SORRY FOR YOUR PREDICAMENT.
SORRY?
NOT YET...
...BUT IT *WILL* COME.
THOOOOOOM

THE FORM YOU HAVE TAKEN WAS A CLOSE FRIEND TO ME.
KOFF
YOU MOLEST HIS MEMORY BY STEALING HIS VISAGE.
TWOKK
URAGH--
SEEING HIS PROUD FACE DISTORTED IN THIS WAY RAISES SUCH A *FURY* IN MY SOUL--
I WILL SMASH HIS FEATURES FROM YOUR SKULL!
DOOOOM

PREPARE FOR HELA'S FRIGID EMBRACE, FIEND.
YOU DESERVE NO BETTER.
PERHAPS...
...BUT THE PHOENIX WILL DECIDE MY FATE.
ZZAAZKK--SHWOOOM
NOT YOU, GOD OF THUNDER.
FRZAPP
ZZRAKK
ZRASK

WHAT TRANSPIRES--?
THE DESERTING CIVILIANS HAD BEEN CORRUPTED, CAPTAIN MAR-VELL.
THEY HAVE BEEN SEEN TO.
I DIED, AS ALL THINGS MUST.
THERE WAS PEACE.
REST.
REWARD FOR A LIFE SPENT IN SERVICE OF OTHERS...
I DIDN'T MISS LIFE.
TO BE CONTINUED...

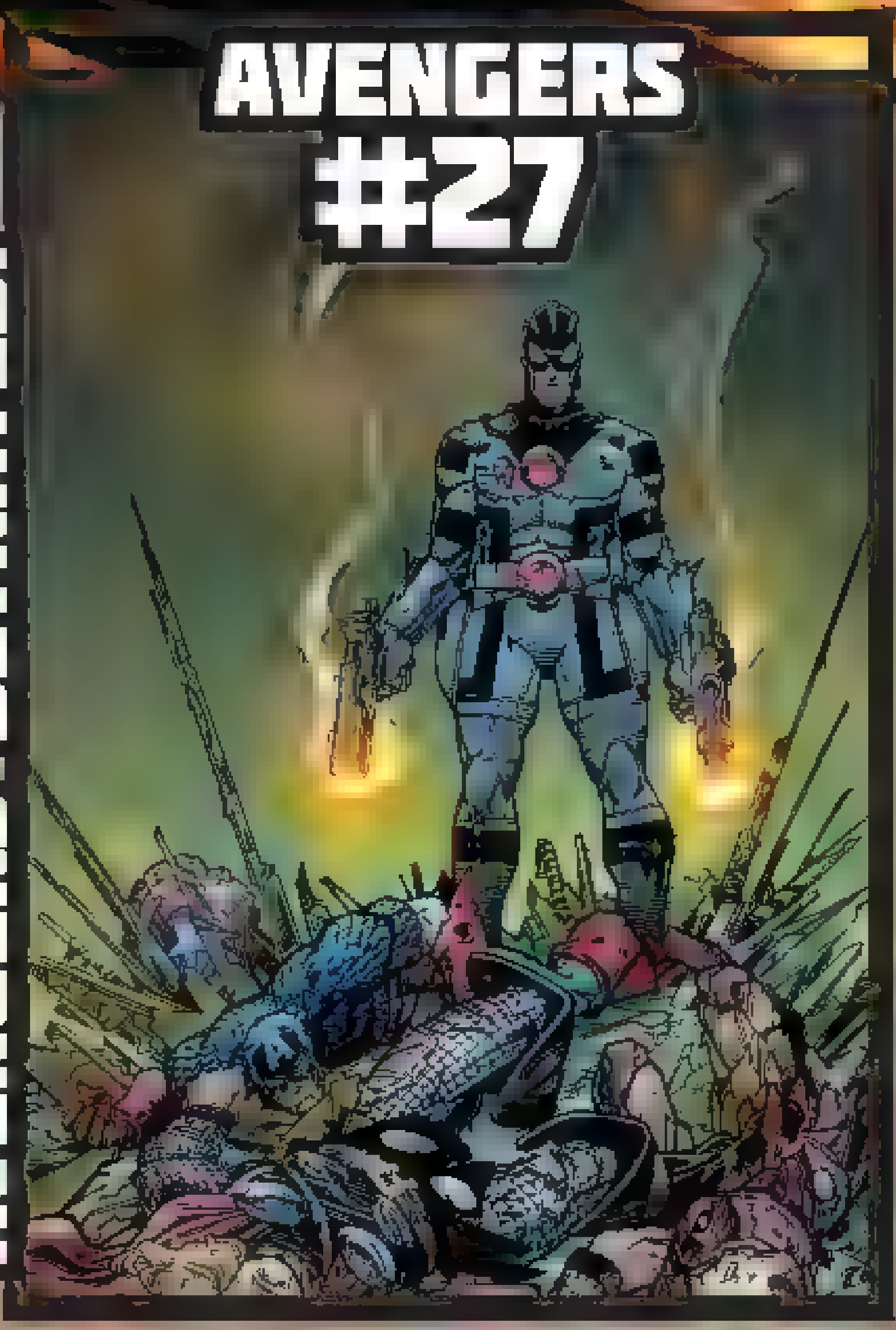
NEXT ISSUE:

SECRET AVENGERS #28

FIRE FALLS ON HALA!

NEW AVENGERS #27

LEGACY OF THE PHOENIX!



AVENGERS #27

AVENGERS BETRAYED!

AVENGERS VS. X-MEN #5

PHOENIX LANDING!

MARVEL
28
A VS X
SECRET AVENGERS
REMENDER
GUEDES
WILSON

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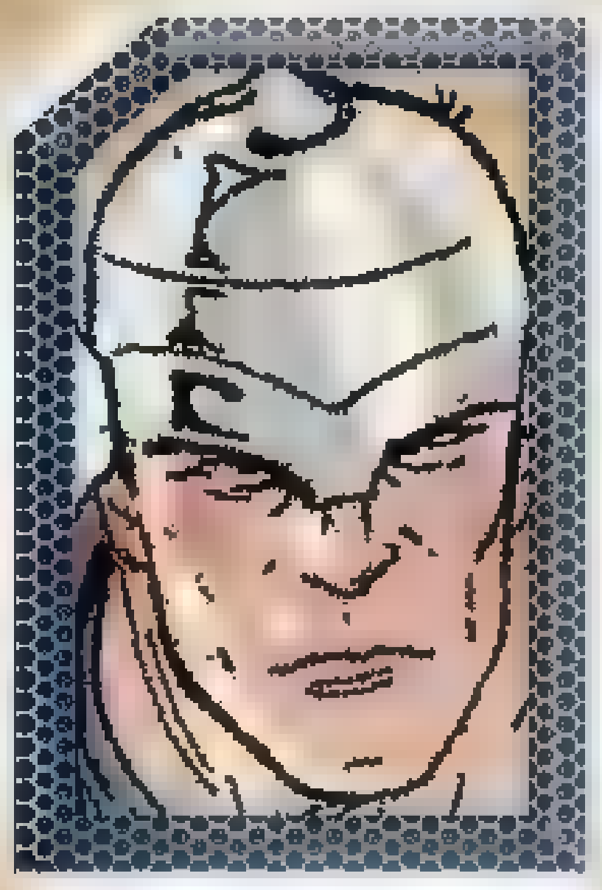
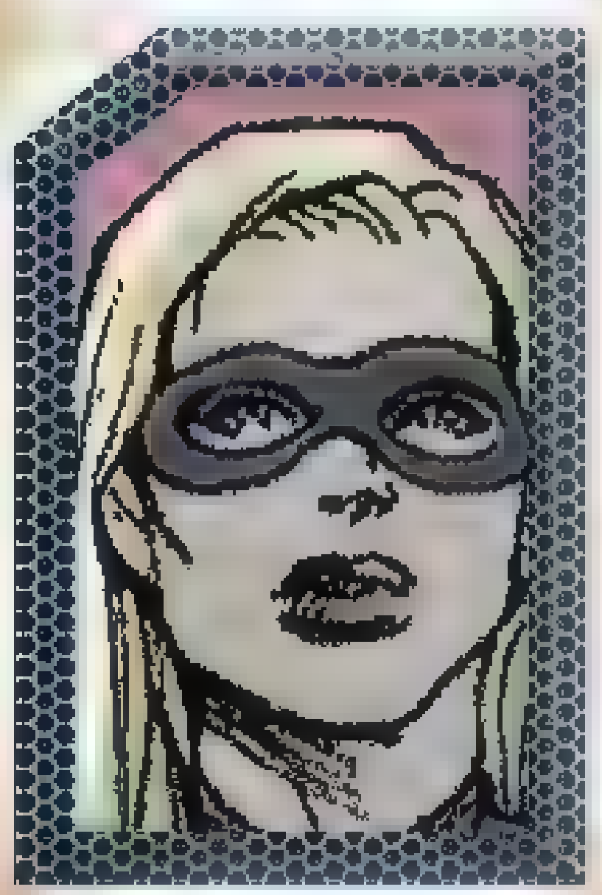
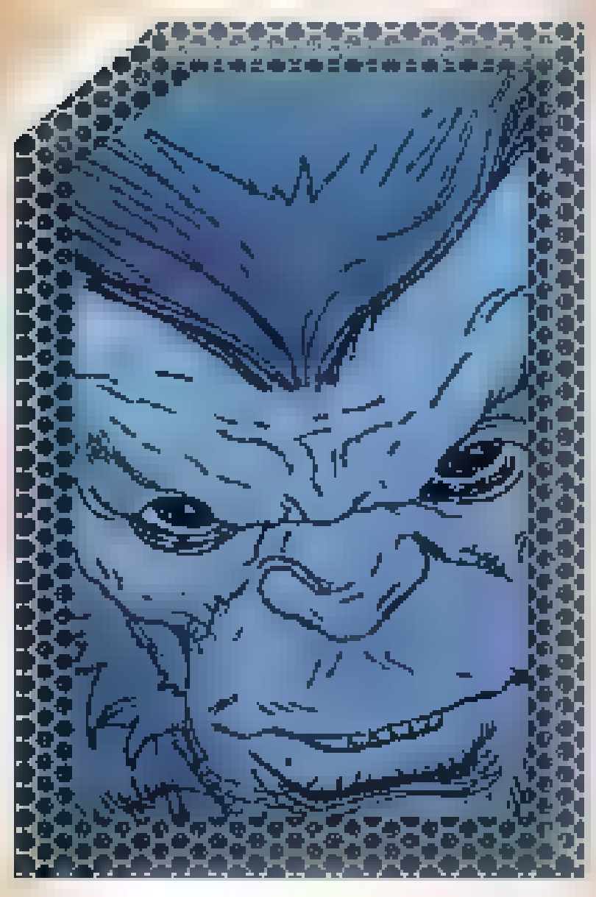
BROUGHT TOGETHER AS A COVERT MISSIONS UNIT BY STEVE ROGERS, A.K.A. CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND BASED ON THE MINIATURIZED LIGHTHOUSE STATION IN ORBIT ABOVE THE EARTH, THE SECRET AVENGERS TAKE ON THE WORLD'S BIGGEST THREATS BEFORE THEY HAPPEN.

SECRET AVENGERS


THOR

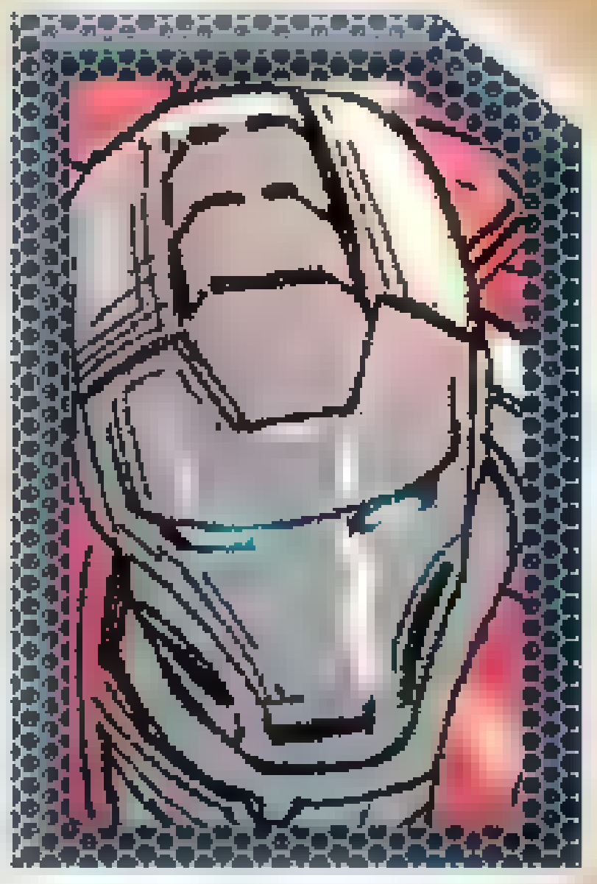

MS. MARVEL

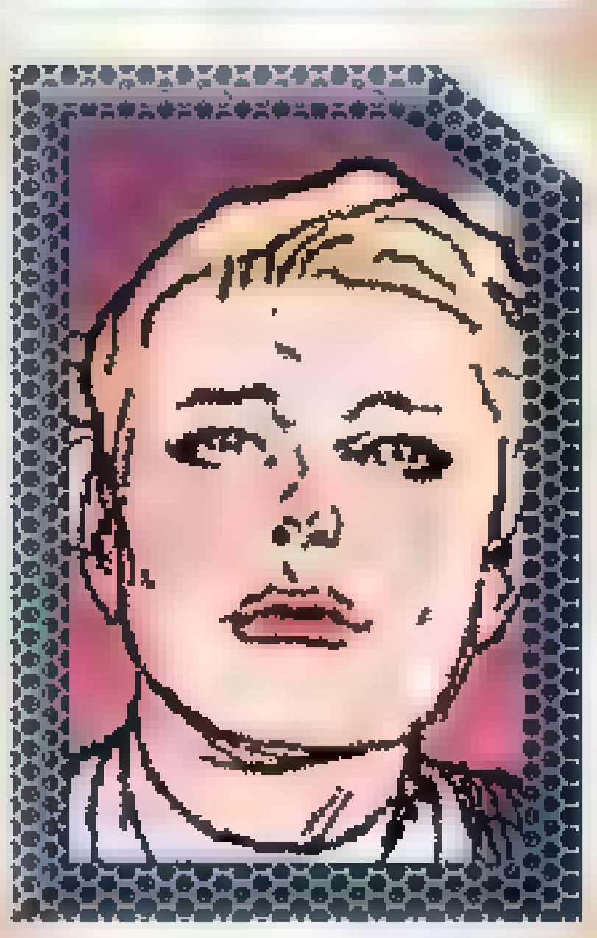

BEAST

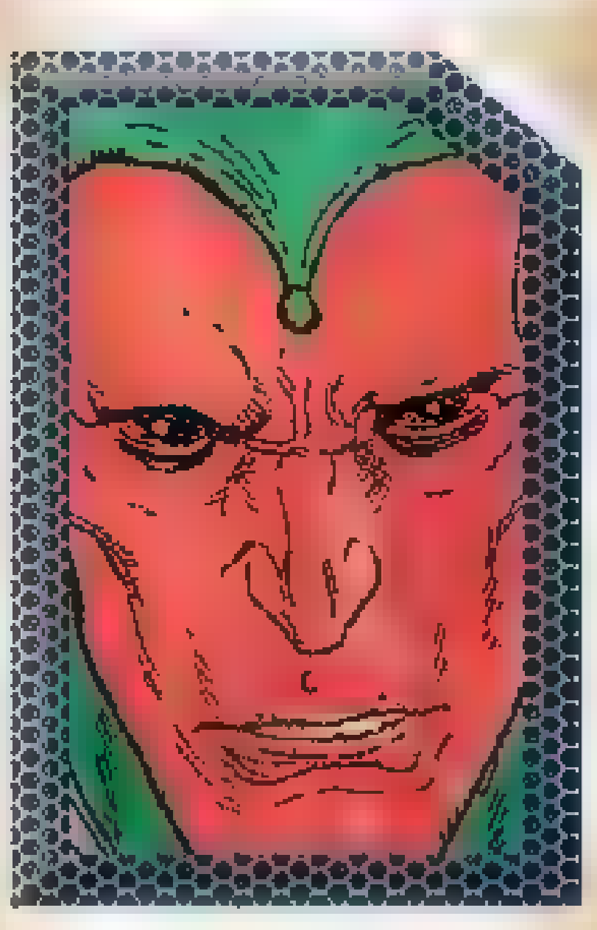
PROTECTOR

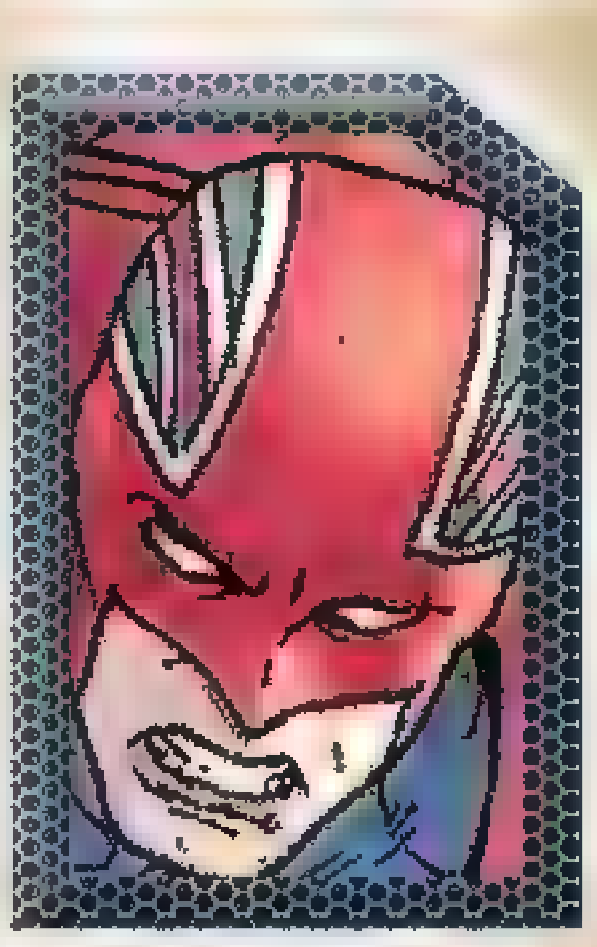
THE WORLD-CONSUMING COSMIC PHOENIX FORCE IS HEADING FOR EARTH. AFTER A FAILED ATTEMPT TO CONTAIN IT, THE SECRET AVENGERS SET DOWN ON HALA, HOMEWORLD OF THE ALIEN KREE, TO TEND THEIR WOUNDED AND MAKE REPAIRS. MEANWHILE, A ROGUE FACTION OF THE KREE, LED BY MINISTER MARVEL, USED A PORTION OF THE PHOENIX'S POWER TO RESURRECT THEIR LONG-DEAD CHAMPION AND FORMER AVENGER, CAPTAIN MARVEL, AND, IN DOING SO, HAVE LURED THE PHOENIX FORCE TOWARD HALA IN AN ATTEMPT TO EVOLVE THEIR RACE.

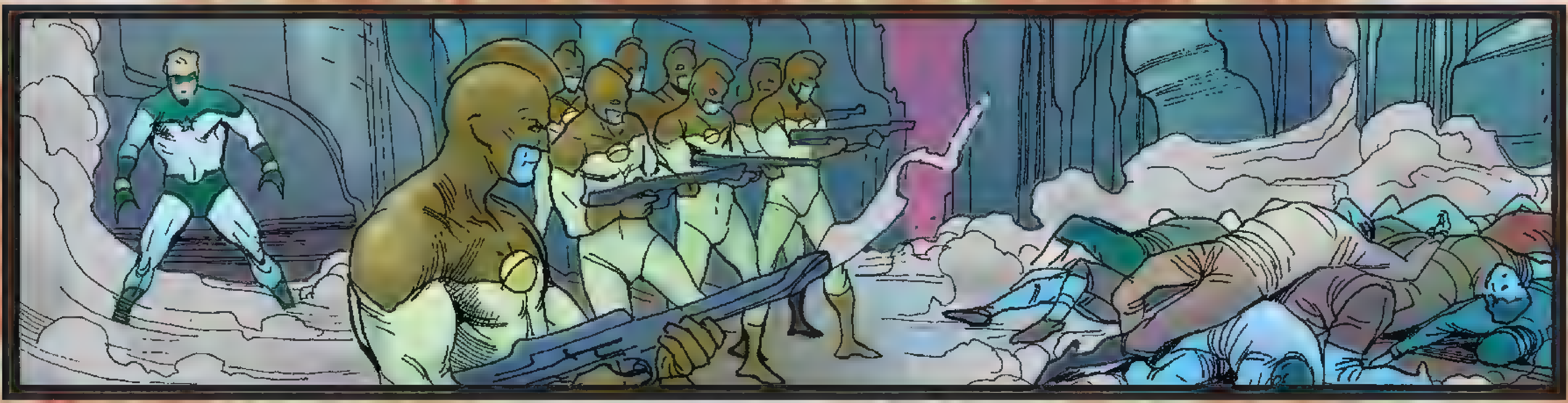
CONFUSED AT BEING BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE AND NOW UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE MINISTER, CAPTAIN MARVEL COERCED THE PROTECTOR AND MS. MARVEL, BOTH WITH KREE HERITAGE OR POWERS, TO STOP THE AVENGERS FROM INTERFERING WITH THE COMING "EVOLUTION" BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY. ESCAPING FROM THEIR FORMER ALLIES, THE VISION MANAGED TO DISRUPT THE MINISTER'S INFLUENCE ON THE RESIDENTS OF HALA LONG ENOUGH FOR THEM TO REALIZE THE DANGER THE FAST-APPROACHING PHOENIX POSED. THESE INNOCENT CIVILIANS WERE THEN BRUTALLY SHOT DOWN BY BRAINWASHED SOLDIERS...WHICH SHOCKED CAPTAIN MARVEL TO HIS SENSES.


WAR MACHINE


VALKYRIE


VISION


CAPTAIN BRITAIN



NOTE: THIS STORY TAKES PLACE BEFORE THE EVENTS OF AVENGERS #26-27

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TONY, I'M LOGGING THIS REPORT WHILE THE DETAILS ARE STILL CLEAR IN MY HEAD.
PLEASE LET THIS COMMUNICATION REACH YOU IN TIME TO DO SOME GOOD.
YOU NEED TO KNOW WHAT WE'VE EXPERIENCED HERE...

...AND HOW WE FAILED.
THE MIND CONTROL WAS AN ORGANIC KREE OMNIWAVE.
IT SUBLIMINALLY INFLUENCED THE ENTIRE POPULATION AND ANYONE FUELED BY KREE ENERGIES.
WE WILL DEAL WITH THESE *THIEVES* AS OUR ANCESTORS DID IN ANCIENT DAYS!
YOU SURE NEITHER OF YOU CAN BREAK THOSE SHACKLES? NOW WOULD BE GOOD.
NOT THAT I HAVEN'T ENJOYED THIS TIME TOGETHER.
THE SHACKLES NEGATE OUR STRENGTH, BUT, BRIAN--YOUR POWER IS BASED UPON THE DEPTH OF YOUR COURAGE-- *IT IS LIMITLESS!*
I'M TRYING, VALKYRIE...
"...BUT THAT AXE *ISN'T* HELPING."
FOR *INVADERS* COME TO *STEAL* OUR COSMIC HERITAGE THERE IS BUT *ONE* FATE!
ALL OF THIS IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO A RELATIVE OF MAR-VELL'S.
A MAN KNOWN AS THE MINISTER MARVEL.
BREAK, DAMN YOU!

THE MINISTER BELIEVED THAT THE PHOENIX WOULD SPARK A GRAND ASCENSION IN HIS PEOPLE.
NOW. AWAKEN.
BE FREE OF THIS SNARE.
OF COURSE, IT'S ALL NONSENSE.
I--I...
CAN YOU SEE IT?
IS *THIS* THE TRUTH?
WHAT HAVE WE DONE?
MIRED IN ILLUSION...
WE HAVE BROUGHT *DEATH* TO HALA.
HE SUFFERED THE SAME DELUSIONS AS SCOTT SUMMERS.

AND LIKE SUMMERS, THE MINISTER MARVEL WAS WILLING TO PLACE THE LIVES OF BILLIONS IN HARM'S WAY TO TEST HIS BLIND FAITH.
OVERLOOKING ONE INESCAPABLE TRUTH...
...THE PHOENIX HAS CONSUMED EVERY WORLD IN ITS PATH.
STOP! KREE BROTHERS AND SISTERS-- LISTEN TO ME!
YOU'RE ALL IN TERRIBLE DANGER.
FUNNY, I WAS JUST BEGINNING TO FEEL IN LESS DANGER.
SEE NOW THE TRUTH--
DISILLUSIONED OF THE LIE IN YOUR MINDS.
YOU MUST EVACUATE HALA.
H-HE'S RIGHT...
WHAT AM I DOING HERE?
THE SKY--WHAT IS IT?
WHO GAVE YOU ORDERS FOR THIS EXECUTION?
HE IS IN THE GRAND PALACE...

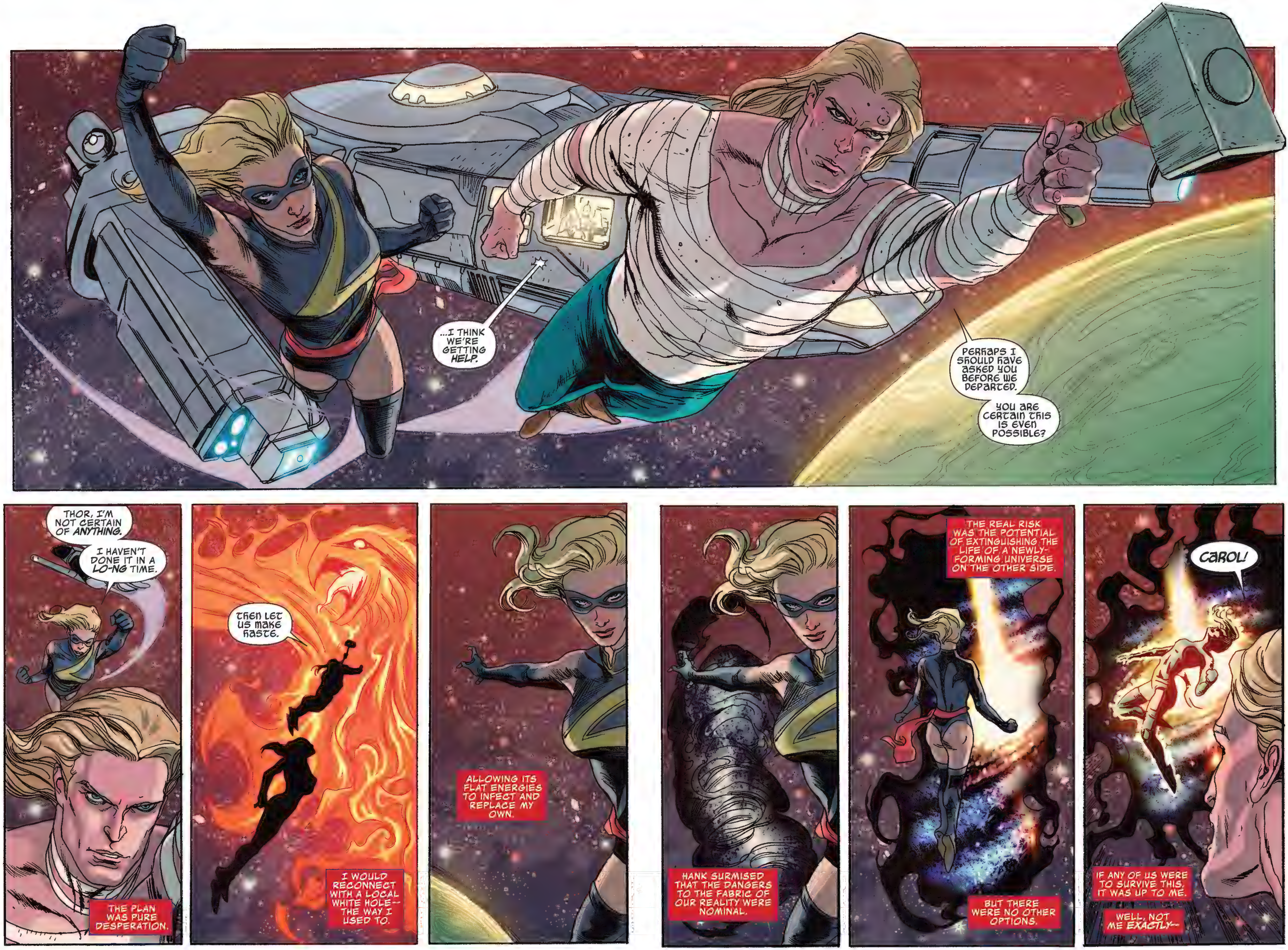
"...THE MINISTER MARVEL IS THE ONE YOU SEEK."
YOUR INFLUENCE HAS BEEN UNDONE, BOY.
THEY COME FOR US NOW.
PERHAPS I WAS HASTY IN OFFERING YOU THE SOBRIQUET *MARVEL MIND.*
YES, FATHER.
I'M SURE YOU COULD HAVE MANIPULATED ALL OF HALA WITH YOUR *GREAT* POWERS OF...
REMIND ME, WHAT GIFTS DO YOU POSSESS?
I HAVE NO SUPERHUMAN ABILITY.
UNLIKE YOU, I WAS BORN WITH VERY LITTLE.
NO MONEY.
NO STATURE.
THE RELATIVE OF A DISGRACED WARRIOR WHO CHOSE HUMANS OVER HIS KREE FAMILY...
THE NAME *MAR-VELL* WAS A CURSE TO ME.

MY GIFT WAS *FAITH.*
FAITH THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING MORE AWAITING MY PEOPLE.
FAITH THAT THERE IS A HAND GUIDING THE UNIVERSE.
REGARDLESS OF THE *PREJUDICE* OUR NAME INSPIRED, I ALWAYS MAINTAINED A SENSE OF MY OWN *WORTH.*
UNDERSTANDING ONE'S OWN *VALUE* IS OFTEN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN *SUCCESS* AND *FAILURE.*
THE PHOENIX IS UPON US.
YOU HAVE KEPT OUR PEOPLE ON HALA AS IT APPROACHED.
YES, I HAVE SUCCEEDED.
AND NOW YOU HAVE NO WORTH.
GHAKK--
SHINKK
GAKK--AHK--
ONCE THE PHOENIX BESTOWS HER GREAT GIFT ON OUR PEOPLE, I WILL RECLAIM OUR FAMILY HONOR.
MAR-VELL WILL NO LONGER BE A NAME ASSOCIATED WITH SHAME AND BETRAYAL.
IT WILL BE THAT OF AN *ICONOCLAST* WHO SAW A GRAND FUTURE AND USHERED IT IN.
I WILL BASK IN THE ADORATION THAT I HAVE EARNED. AND YOUR NAME, MY SON...

"...WILL BE ENTIRELY *OMITTED.*"
TIME IS SHORT AND WE KNOW PRECIOUS LITTLE OF HIS ABILITIES.
IF WHAT THE ACCUSER SAID ABOUT THE MAN'S SON IS TRUE... WE MAY HAVE FEW PLEASANT OPTIONS.
WE HAVE THE ONE OPTION WE NEED TO DEFEAT THIS FOE--
THE MIGHT OF MJOLNIR!
TWOOM
HONOR ME IN YOUR MEMORIES, UNCLE...
"...THEY WILL NEVER AGAIN MOCK THE NAME MAR-VELL."
GZAZAT

SO, WHAT'S THE *PLAN?*
I'M *WIDE OPEN* TO OPTIONS, JAMES.
THERE ISN'T TIME TO EVACUATE THE POPULATION.
IF WE HAD THE PHOENIX CAGE...
WE DON'T. I SAW TO THAT MUCH.
ONLY A MATTER OF MINUTES BEFORE IT REACHES US.
THERE IS PURPOSE LURKING BEHIND YOUR WORDS.
SPEAK QUICKLY, McCOY.
CAROL, THERE IS ONE OPTION.
IT COULD COST YOU. COULD...
I KNOW. I'D ALREADY CONSIDERED IT, HANK.
IF YOU THINK IT HAS A CHANCE IN HELL OF WORKING...
...LET'S GET TO IT.
DEFLECTORS TO FRONT!
DRAW THE MONSTER FROM THE REST OF THE FLEET!

UNLOAD FORWARD OMNIPULSE!
HOLD NOTHING BACK.
IF WE DON'T STOP THIS THING, EVERY KREE ON HALA--
KRADOOOM
CAPTAIN--WE'VE LOST COMMAND ONE.
STAY THE COURSE--WE WILL FIND A WAY!
MA'AM, I'M RECEIVING WORD FROM GROUND CONTROL ORDERING THE FLEET BACK TO HALA.
THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT. WE CAN'T JUST GIVE UP!
CAPTAIN, I THINK YOU SHOULD COME SEE THIS.
I DON'T THINK WE ARE GIVING UP...


...I THINK WE'RE GETTING *HELP.*
PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE ASKED YOU BEFORE WE DEPARTED.
YOU ARE CERTAIN THIS IS EVEN POSSIBLE?
THOR, I'M NOT CERTAIN OF *ANYTHING.*
I HAVEN'T DONE IT IN A *LO-NG* TIME.
THE PLAN WAS PURE DESPERATION.
THEN LET US MAKE HASTE.
I WOULD RECONNECT WITH A LOCAL WHITE HOLE-- THE WAY I USED TO.
ALLOWING ITS FLAT ENERGIES TO INFECT AND REPLACE MY OWN.
HANK SURMISED THAT THE DANGERS TO THE FABRIC OF OUR REALITY WERE NOMINAL.
THE REAL RISK WAS THE POTENTIAL OF EXTINGUISHING THE LIFE OF A NEWLY-FORMING UNIVERSE ON THE OTHER SIDE.
BUT THERE WERE NO OTHER OPTIONS.
CAROL!
IF ANY OF US WERE TO SURVIVE THIS, IT WAS UP TO ME.
WELL, NOT ME *EXACTLY*--

IT WOULD BE UP TO BINARY.
I BEGAN TO NEGATE THE MASS OF THE PHOENIX.
TO DRAW IT INTO MY BODY AGAINST ITS WILL.
HERE IT COMES!

TO SEND IT THROUGH A PORTAL OF THOR'S MAKING TO THE DARK MATTER FIELDS ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF EXISTENCE.
TONY, THE POWER WAS... INEXPLICABLE.
THERE WAS NO MORE TIME OR SPACE.
I COULD SEE THINGS FROM ALL SIDES AT ONCE.
MY OWN LIFE RECEDED TO SUCH A SMALL PART OF MY CONSCIOUSNESS.
FEAR WAS GONE, AS WAS THE IDEA OF HUMAN MORALITY.
ALL OF WHAT I WAS SHRUNK DOWN TO A PINPOINT.
BUT WHAT I FOUND REJECTED ME.
IT MADE A CHOICE.
NO-- PLEASE!
LET ME STAY--!

REVERTED BACK TO THAT PINPOINT SIZE.
SOMETHING IS WRONG...
YES. AND I THINK I KNOW WHAT.
A MOTE IN THE INFINITE STREAM OF LIFE.
I BECAME NOTHING.
YOU DID YOUR UTMOST, CAROL.
BUT THERE WAS NEVER A QUESTION OF THE OUTCOME.
I DISAGREE.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, BRADDOCK?

MY JOB.
THOR'S WORDS.
REMEMBER.
"YOUR CHALLENGE IS TO LISTEN TO YOUR HEART, BRADDOCK--
"TO SEE YOURSELF FOR WHAT YOU ARE--
"A NOBLE MAN.
GRAGHAGHH!
"ONCE YOU DO, ONCE YOU SEE THAT...

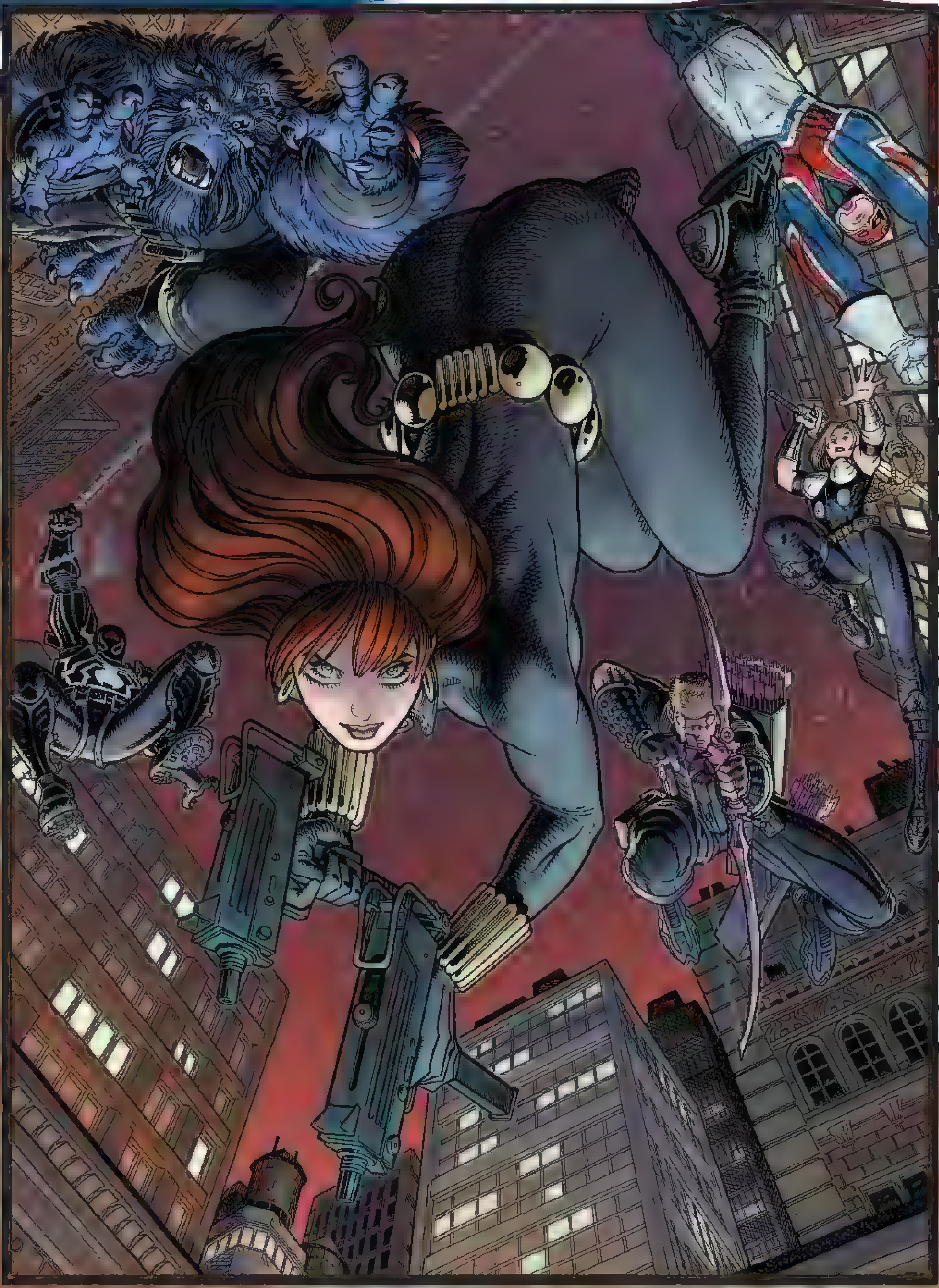
"...THERE IS NOTHING IN THE HEAVENS THAT CAN MATCH YOUR STRENGTH."
WE'VE MET MANY TIMES BEFORE, CHAOS BRINGER.
NEVER BEFORE HAVE YOU SO IMPERILED INNOCENT LIFE!
COME NOW, LET ME SHOW YOU WHO YOU FACE--
CAPTAIN BRITAIN, THE PROTECTOR OF THE ENTIRE BLOODY OMNIVERSE!
HE WAS DOING IT.
BRIAN BRADDOCK, WHO HAD HIDDEN IN OUR MIDST ALL THIS TIME
EXPANDING HIS SHIELDS, HE PUSHED THE PHOENIX BACK
THE PHOENIX WILL NOT STOP UNTIL IT HAS CLAIMED ITS TRUE OBJECTIVE.
ITS ENERGIES WITHIN ME.
THAT'S THE THING, CAROL.
NO! YOU CAN'T!
IT'S BEEN...A MIRACLE!
WE ONLY JUST GOT YOU BACK!
I CAN'T LOSE YOU AGAIN...CAN'T REPLACE YOU.
YOU'RE NO ONE'S REPLACEMENT, CAROL.
YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH, OLD BOY!
RELEASE ME, MAR-VELL! TRUST ME--I WILL NOT BEND!
THAT'S THE THING YOU NEVER UNDERSTOOD, BRIAN.
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONFIDENCE AND ARROGANCE--

--IS KNOWING WHEN YOU NEED HELP.
HE WAS EVERYTHING I REMEMBERED.
MORE.
NOT A MOMENT'S HESITATION.
ONCE HE KNEW WHAT IT WOULD TAKE TO SAVE HIS PEOPLE--
HE GAVE IT WILLINGLY.
I DIDN'T MISS LIFE.
HIS UNRIVALED NOBILITY AND COURAGE.
HOW WE NEED HIM.
HOW WE NEED THAT PURE *VALOR*.
HOW MUCH DIFFERENT THINGS WOULD BE IF HE WERE STILL WITH US.
AND HOW MUCH I MISS MY DEAR FRIEND.

I WOKE UP UNINJURED. PHYSICALLY AT LEAST.
WE'VE SPENT THE TIME SINCE HIS DEATH REBUILDING THE QUINCARRIER.
THE KREE HAVE BEEN HELPFUL.
THOR'S INJURIES... HE'S ALIVE AT LEAST.
McCOY AND BRADDOCK ARE HOPEFUL THEY CAN REBUILD THE PHOENIX CAGE, BUT NOTHING IS CERTAIN.
BRIAN, CAN...CAN WE TALK?
NOH-VARR HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO FULLY RECOVER FROM THE ORDEAL.
HAUNTED BY SOME GHOST.
I'M HERE TO LISTEN.
IN THE FACE OF THE HORROR STILL AWAITING US, THE TEAM'S MORALE IS SURPRISINGLY HIGH.
INFUSED BY THE NOBILITY OF A LONG DEAD FRIEND'S SELFLESSNESS AND STRENGTH.
THE IMAGE OF A LONE MAN WILLING TO SACRIFICE HIS OPPORTUNITY FOR LIFE...

...FOR A WORLD, AND PEOPLE, THAT FORSOOK HIM.
INSPIRED BY THE VERY NOTION SUCH NOBILITY IS POSSIBLE.
CAPTAIN MARVEL
THE NAME WILL ALWAYS DEFINE THE BEST OF US.
PERHAPS IT SHOULD LIVE ON.
END.

NEXT ISSUE:

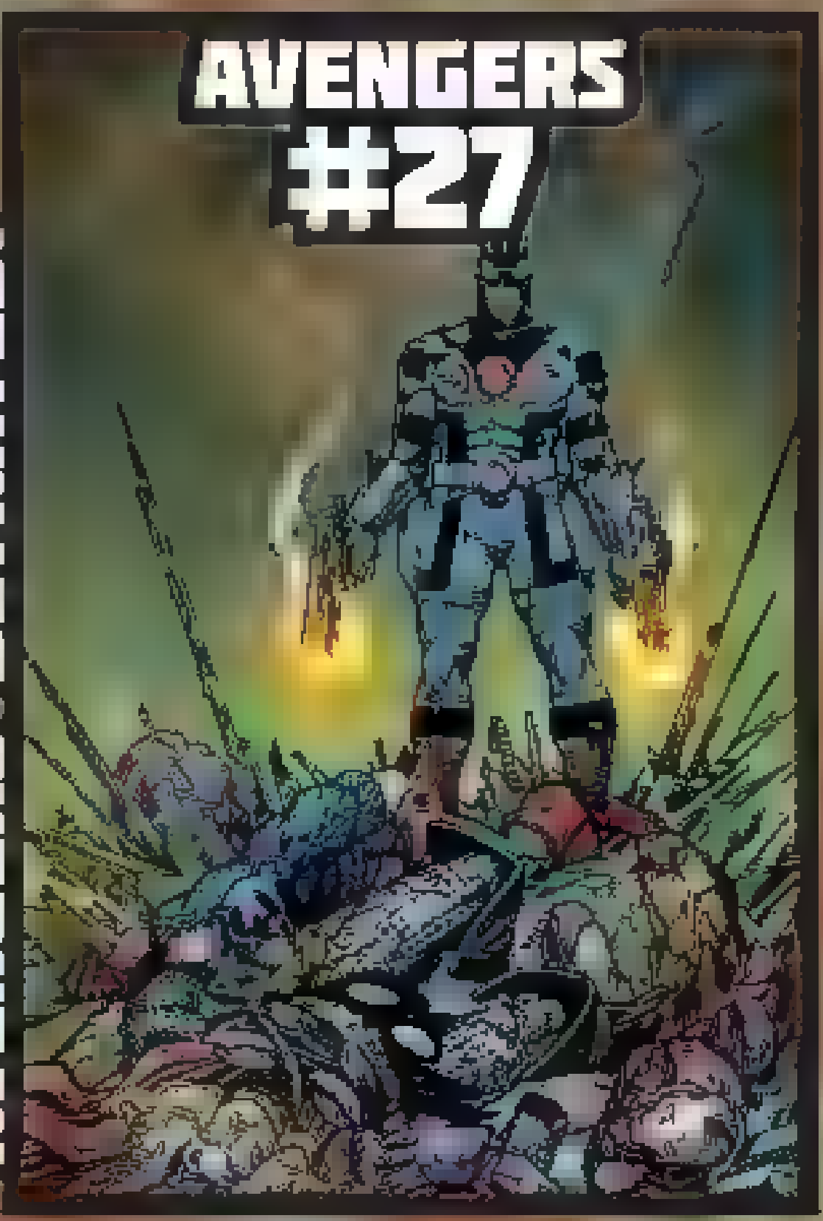


SECRET AVENGERS #29

RETURN TO THE RED LIGHT NATION!

NEW AVENGERS
#27

LEGACY OF THE PHOENIX!


AVENGERS
#27

AVENGERS BETRAYED!

AVENGERS VS. X-MEN
#6

ENTER: THE PHOENIX FIVE!

REMENDER·SCALERA·WILSON
SECRET AVENGERS
MARVEL
29
ARTHUR ADAMS 3-12 2012

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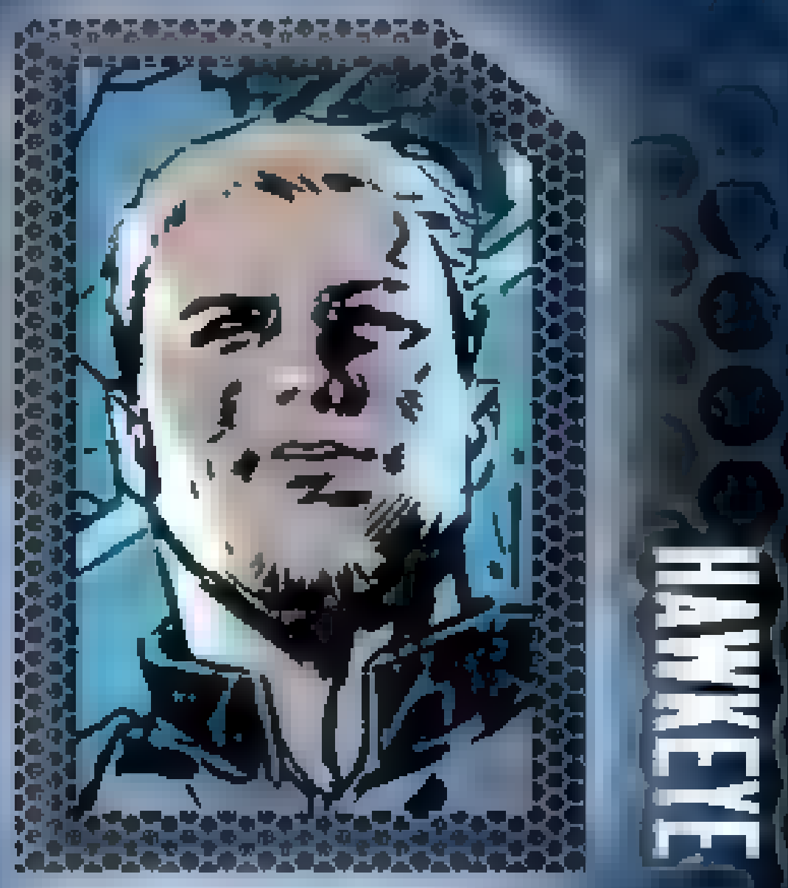
THE NATION OF BAGALIA
THE NECK SNAPS.
SEVENTH IN AS MANY MINUTES.
MEN WHO TRUSTED ME.
KRITCH
BUT THE ABYSS IS COMING.
AND WE HELPED PAVE THE ROAD.
FOR US, THERE IS NO REDEMPTION.
MAX FURY SOLD ME ON A STRUGGLE TO BRING LASTING UNITY TO MANKIND.
EAT ENOUGH OF SOMEONE'S CRAP--
EVENTUALLY IT'S ALL YOU CAN TASTE.
MAX'LL SOON DISCOVER I TOOK THE SERPENT CROWN.
SEND HIS NEW ARMY TO KILL ME.
THEY'VE BEEN PLANNING THIS FOR A HUNDRED YEARS.
MANIPULATED SO MANY TO JOIN THEM.
UNLESS I KEEP THIS CROWN AWAY FROM THEM--
THEY'LL SUCCEED.
IF THEY SUCCEED...

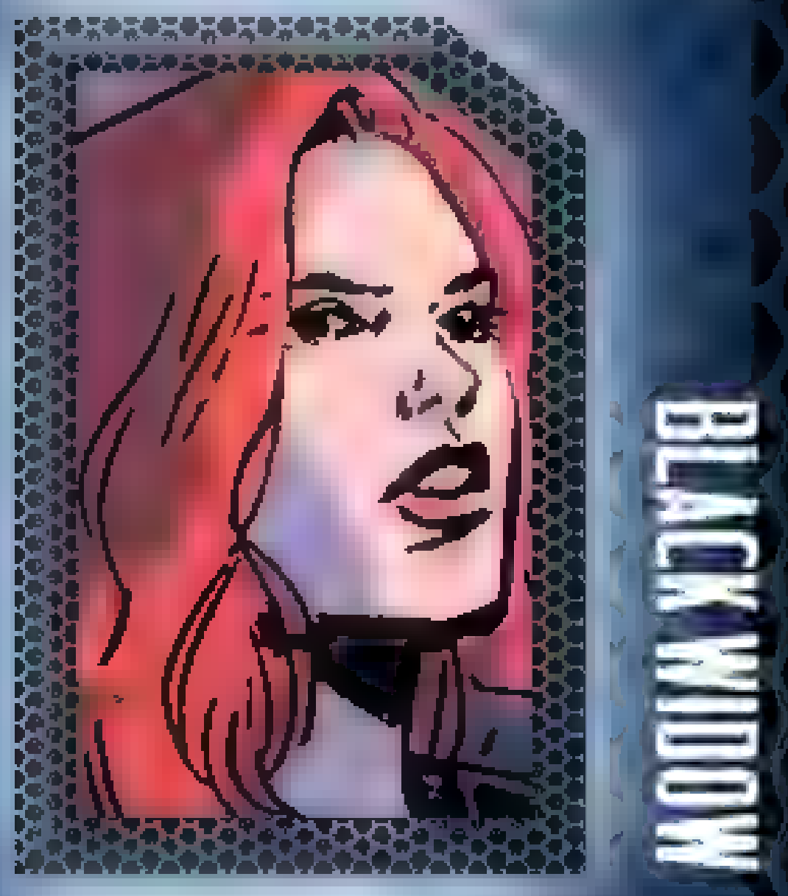
...THE MASTERS OF EVIL WILL MARCH ON MANKIND
JOHN STEELE.
YOU QUITTING US WITHOUT GIVING NOTICE?
WHAT'S IN THE BACKPACK? SWIPE A STAPLER ON YOUR WAY OUT?
HOPE IT'S NOT WHAT I THINK IT IS.
BECAUSE I'LL TELL YOU WHAT, STANDING BETWEEN THE WORLD'S MOST RUTHLESS AND ETHICALLY UNCOMPROMISED MERCENARIES, NUT JOBS AND MUTATED PSYCHOPATHS AND THEIR LIFE'S AMBITIONS...
DANGEROUS WORK.
LISTEN TO ME! HE'S LYING TO YOU! LYING TO ALL OF--
THE SPIRIT OF POLLUTION *RELISHES* LIES AND BETRAYAL.
BUT YOU?
YOU REEK OF HONORABLE INTENTIONS.
DEAR GOD...
THE NOBLE MUST SUFFER *VENGEANCE* FOR THEIR CRIMES.

BROUGHT TOGETHER AS A COVERT MISSIONS UNIT BY STEVE ROGERS, A.K.A. CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND BASED ON THE MINIATURIZED LIGHTHOUSE STATION IN ORBIT ABOVE THE EARTH, THE SECRET AVENGERS TAKE ON THE WORLD'S BIGGEST THREATS BEFORE THEY HAPPEN.

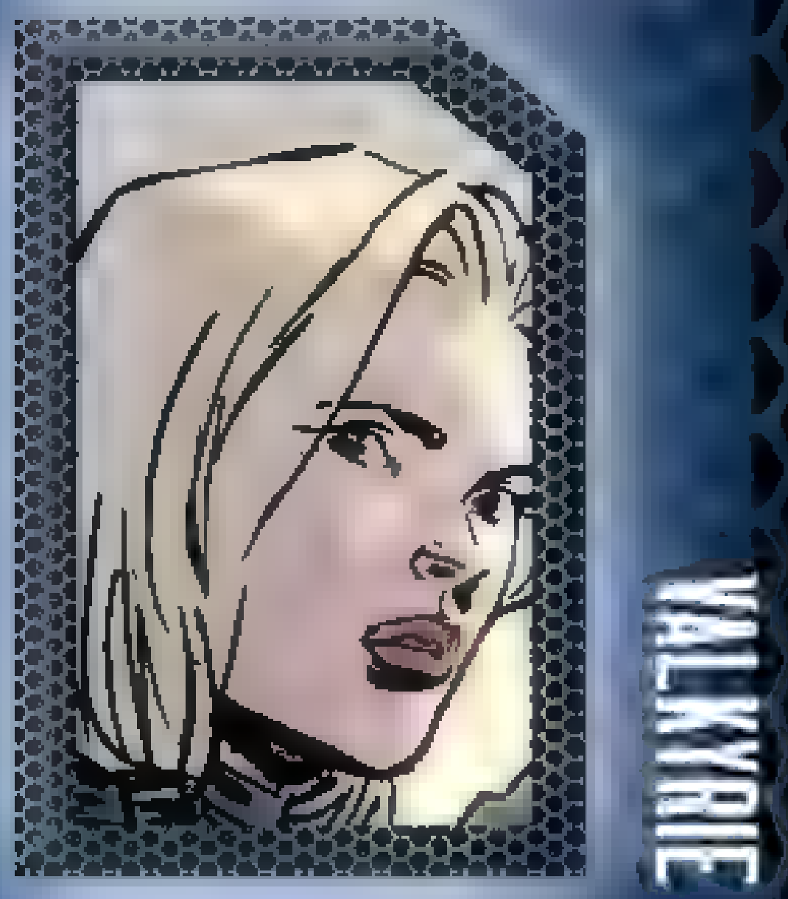
SECRET AVENGERS

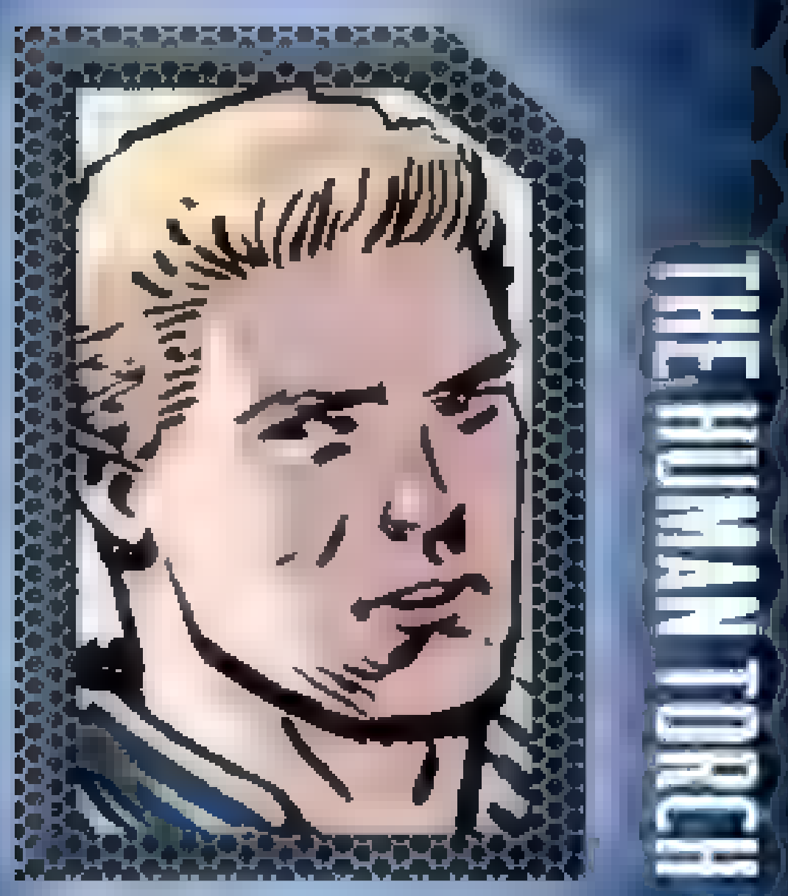
A COUNCIL OF MASTERS

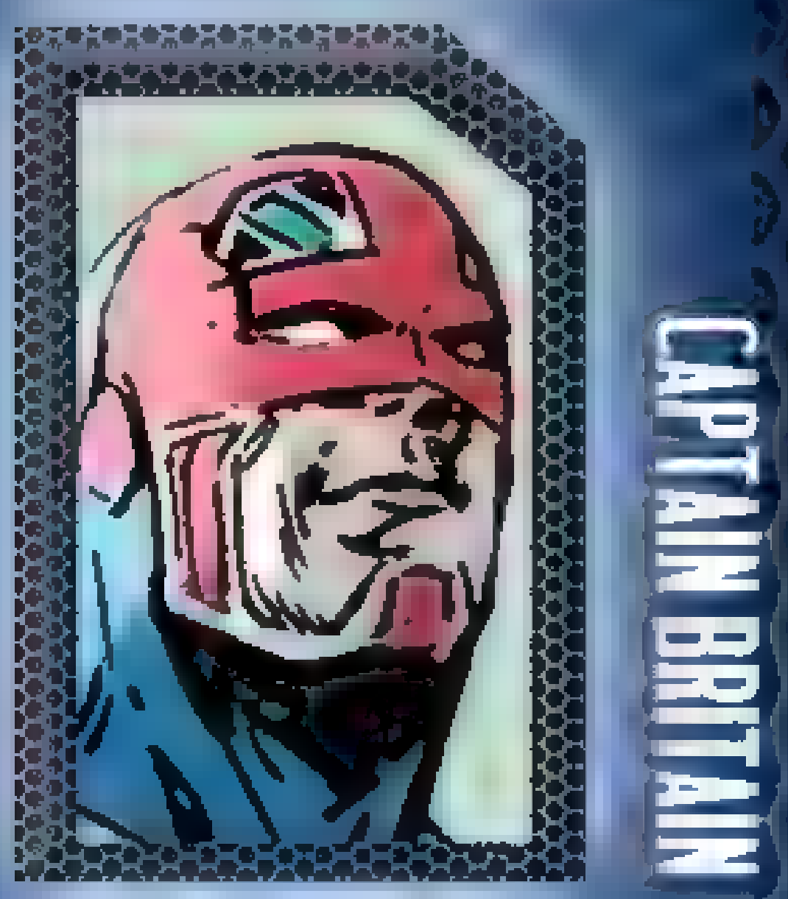

HAWKEYE


BLACK WIDOW

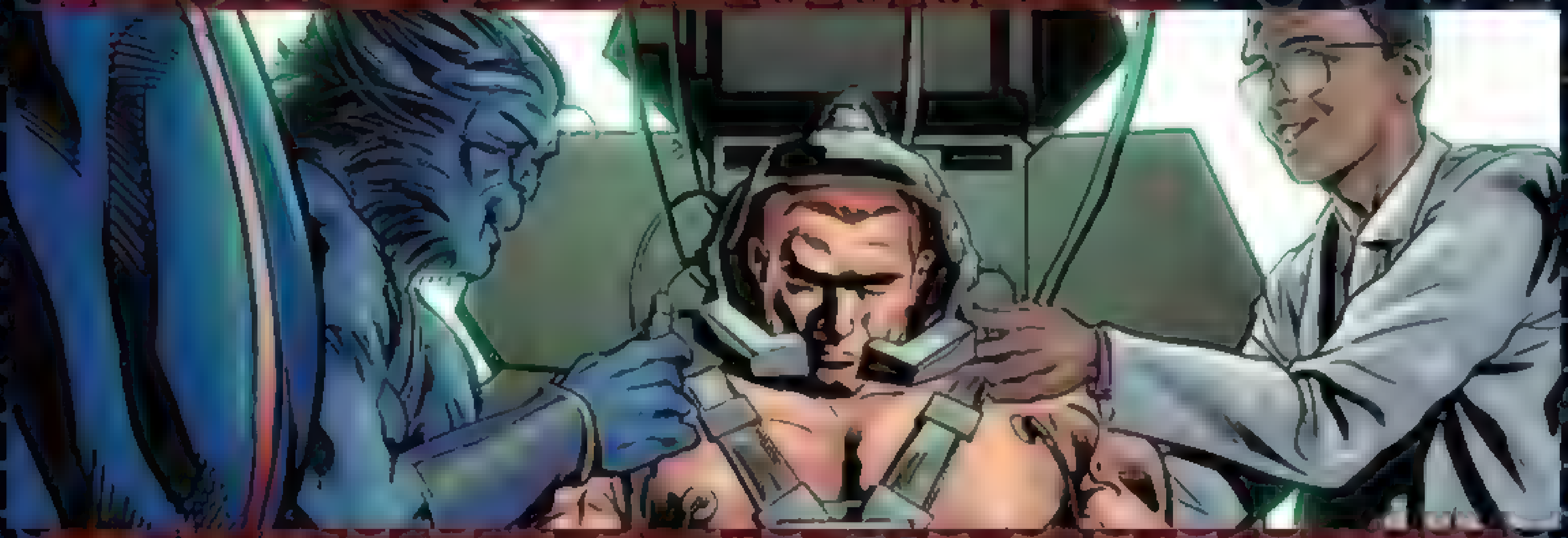
BEAST


VALKYRIE


THE HUMAN TORCH

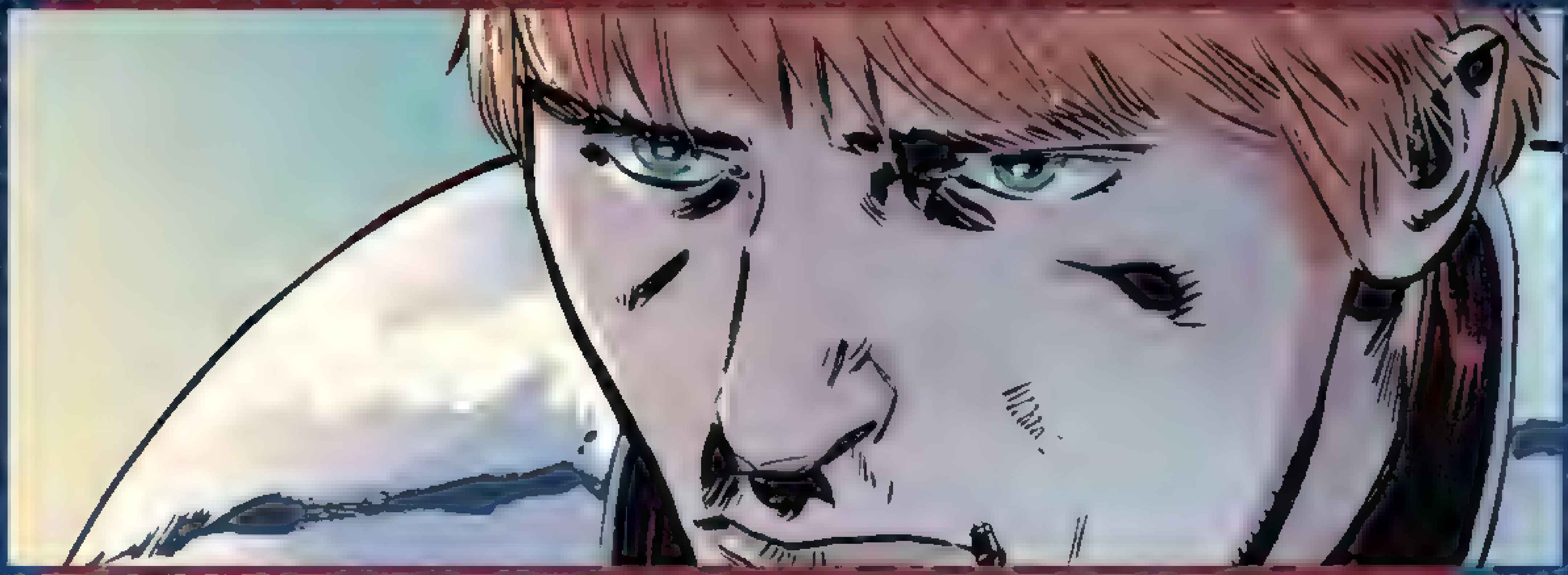

CAPTAIN BRITAIN

VENOM



JOHN STEELE WAS THE ORIGINAL SUPER-SOLDIER, A PRECURSOR TO CAPTAIN AMERICA WHO HAS FOUGHT FOR HIS COUNTRY SINCE THE CIVIL WAR. IN WWII STEELE CAME UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE EVIL SHADOW COUNCIL. THE SECRET AVENGERS CAPTURED STEELE AND BROKE THE CONTROL THE COUNCIL HAD ON HIS MIND, CONVERTING HIM TO THEIR SIDE.

RECENTLY THE SECRET AVENGERS BATTLED THE DESCENDANTS, A LINEAGE OF SENTIENT, ARTIFICIAL CREATURES CREATED BY A MAN KNOWN ONLY AS FATHER, WHO WORKED FROM THE DESIGN OF THE ORIGINAL HUMAN TORCH. FOR YEARS THEY HAVE LIVED AMONG US, NOT EVEN KNOWING THEIR TRUE NATURE THEMSELVES. NOW THEY ARE BEING CALLED HOME, VIOLENTLY IF NECESSARY. WHILE TRYING TO RESCUE A YOUNG DESCENDANT FROM BEING RECLAIMED, THE HUMAN TORCH WAS GRIEVOUSLY INJURED AND ANT-MAN WAS BELIEVED KILLED IN ACTION. WHEN ANT-MAN REAPPEARED HE WAS WELCOMED BACK BY HIS COMRADES, BUT UNBEKNOWNST TO ANY OF THEM, IT SEEMS ERIC O'GRADY IS NOW WORKING FOR FATHER.



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MOSCOW
SUBTLETY IS QUIETLY SUBDUING THE MAD CORPSE OF SORCERER RASPUTIN AND PILOTING HIS SKYCHURCH SAFELY INTO S.H.I.E.L.D. CUSTODY, VENOM.
SUBTLETY IS NOT THROWING THREE THUGS INTO THE CRAFT'S GRAVITY TURBINE.
SUBTLETY IS NOT SMASHING THE SHIP'S CONTROL PANEL WHILE TRADING BLOWS WITH THE PRIMARY TARGET.
HOW ARE YOU DOING WITH RIGHTING THIS THING, VALKYRIE?
THE CONTROL PANEL IS STILL BROKEN, YOU BULL DOLT!
‹STANDING AGAINST THE ABYSS ON THE EVE OF ITS ARRIVAL ONLY SERVES TO ENSURE RETRIBUTION!›
‹A SMALL TASTE OF WHAT AWAITS YOU IN THE ABYSS!›
ZARRARARRA
‹H-HOW?›
‹HOW DID THIS DOG REJECT THE KISS?!›
DON'T HAVE TO SPEAK RUSSIAN TO KNOW YOU'RE A LITTLE DISAPPOINTED THAT DIDN'T HURT ME.
BAD NEWS, PAL...

...IT'S ONLY GONNA GET WORSE.
BLAMM
GHA--
HOW WE DOING ON THAT CONTROL PANEL?
STILL BROKEN.
NOW, IF YOU CAN SHUT UP AND DO EXACTLY AS I SAY...
"...WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO SAVE THE PEOPLE BELOW."
C'MON... C'MON...
TWIPP
YES!

"ANOTHER CLASSIC *HAIL MARY* PLAY BY THOMPSON!"
WELL, OTHER THAN LOSING A SEASON'S WORTH OF TURNIPS...
...I'D SAY WE SAVED THE DAY.
NO THANKS TO YOU.
WELL, *SOME* THANKS.
STILL, FIFTH UNDEAD SORCERER THIS WEEK...
THE *SHADOW COUNCIL* IS MAKING THEIR MOVE.
UNTIL WE DISCOVER WHAT THAT IS, AND *STOP THEM*, THE DAY IS *FAR* FROM SAVED, AGENT.
HOW ARE YOU?
HOW DO I LOOK?
LIKE A GODDESS.
I-I SHOULD CALL LIGHTHOUSE...
GET US OUT OF HERE...
...BEFORE ANYONE SEES US.

BREEP BREEP
WAKE UP, AGENTS!
SET THOSE PYM CHARGES AND SHRINK THAT SKYCHURCH DOWN. CAN'T HAVE THAT SHADOW COUNCIL TECH FALLING INTO THE HANDS OF ANY GOVERNMENT.
GET IT TOGETHER. LOCAL AUTHORITIES ARE SWARMING...
"...YOU'RE IN AN EXTREMELY HOT ZONE."
YES, IT'S SAFE TO TALK.
YOU'RE BREAKING PROTOCOL CONTACTING ME EARLY, JANET.
WE NEED TO BE CERTAIN WE'RE STILL ON TARGET.
YEAH, I KNOW WHAT HAPPENS IF I FAIL.
I KNOW.
YOU SOUND HESITANT. I'D HATE TO THINK YOU WERE DOING THIS AGAINST YOUR WISHES.
NO... NOTHING LIKE THAT.
ERIC, THE FUTURE I COME FROM IS PERFECT. THERE IS NO DEATH. NO WAR. NO HUNGER.
MANKIND ASCENDS BEYOND THE MUD IT WAS BORN IN AND INTO THE PERFECT METAL IT CREATES FOR ITSELF.
FOR YOUR PART, YOU ARE A GREAT HERO THERE.
WHAT YOU DO WILL SHAPE THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY.
I'LL MAKE FATHER PROUD.
ERIC, IT'S CLINT. MEETING ROOM IN FIVE MINUTES.
LOUD AND CLEAR, HAWKEYE. ABOUT TIME...

"...I WAS GETTING A LITTLE *ANTSY*."
TARGET IS MAX FURY, A LIVING *LIFE MODEL DECOY* WITH MOST OF NICK FURY'S MEMORIES. THAT'S A *DANGEROUS* THING.
WE BELIEVE HE IS NOW RUNNING THE SUDDENLY VERY ACTIVE *SHADOW COUNCIL*.
HE'S USED THEIR WEALTH TO FUND THE ANARCHISTIC RED LIGHT NATION *BAGALIA*.
THERE, HE'S GATHERING TOGETHER A NEW *MASTERS OF EVIL* WITH MEMBERSHIP IN THE *HUNDREDS*.
NICE. SO WE GET A BIG NET, GO SCOOP 'EM ALL UP AT ONCE.
BAGALIA IS A SOVEREIGN NATION. THIS IS *DELICATE*.
OUR MOLE INSIDE THE COUNCIL, JOHN STEELE, AND HIS RECENT REPORT, MAKE IT EVEN MORE SO.
MAX HAS FOUND BOTH *THE SERPENT CROWN* AND THE *CROWN OF THORNS*.
POWERFUL VOODOO, AS YOU ALL KNOW.
STEELE'S ORDERS WERE TO STEAL THEM AND CONTACT US FOR EVAC.
HE NEVER DID.
TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, LAST WEEK, AN ARCHEOLOGIST AND HIS SON DUG UP THE THIRD CROWN TO THIS SET, THE CROWN OF WOLVES.
THEY WERE FOUND DEAD THIS MORNING.
NO IDEA WHY MAX WANTS ALL THREE CROWNS, BUT JOHN STEELE KNOWS.
WE NEED TO GET TO HIM, AND GET HIM OUT OF THERE, AND HEAR WHAT HE KNOWS.
BLACK WIDOW WILL STAY BEHIND AS MISSION OPERATOR.
PLUS, LITTLE PARVEZ NEEDS TO BE CARED FOR.
BLACK WIDOW: SUPER-SPY OF THE BABYSITTER SET!
I'M NOT ASHAMED TO CARE FOR AN ORPHANED CHILD, ERIC.
IS THIS OUR *ENTIRE* PARTY?
TORCH IS OUT OF COMMISSION.
PYM AND CAPTAIN BRITAIN ARE HUNTING DESCENDANTS.
BEAST IS OFF DOING X-MEN BUSINESS AT THE SCHOOL.
WE'RE THE MISSION...

"...YOU BETTER PRAY WE'RE ENOUGH."
BAGALIA:
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, YOU HAVE TRAVELED ACROSS THE GLOBE FOR A SHOW UNLIKE ANY OTHER!
THE CIRCUS OF CRIME'S CIRCLE OF SNUFF HAS DELIVERED! BUT HAS THIS VINTAGE ERA SUPER-SOLDIER TAKEN ENOUGH ABUSE? IS HE READY FOR HIS GREAT REWARD?!
WILL THE CLUMSY PLASMA KNIVES OF NEARSIGHTED GRUMPY THE CLOWN OFFER SWIFT MERCY TO THIS SAD FASCIST?
I BEEN HUFFIN' MODEL GLUE FER ADDED CHALLENGE.
STAY ALIVE
MUCH AS YOU DESERVE THIS-- HOLD ON--
--ALL ON YOU--
--TO LET THE WORLD KNOW WHAT'S COMING.
YERAGHH!
SKMPD
A KILL SHOT! THE CLOWN TAKES MERCY ON THE BIG LUG!
WON'T BE LONG NOW, STEELE.
ONE LAST PUSH--
THAT ONE GOT YOU RIGHT IN YOUR BIG SEXY HEART.
--TOO MUCH ON THE LINE--
--LAST THING YOU'LL EVER DO-- SO DO IT--

--PUT IT RIGHT.
WHA--
GHRAGH!
WRUNCHHCH
PYTHON!
TWONKK
THAT UNCHIVALROUS ACT WILL COST YOU, SIR.
FWOOOOOOSH
KILL HIM!
EASIER SAID THAN DONE--
BUT I'M WILLIN' TA BET A FEW THOUSAND VOLTS'LL DO THE TRICK.

FEED ON HIM, MY PET!
GZZAKKK
HEY-- NO!
YERRGAH--
THAT'S IT, BUDDY-- RUN!
GET THE BLOOD PUMPIN' AN' SPURTIN'.
PUT ON A SHOW!
GIVE THE AUDIENCE A GOOD THRILL--

THRILLING ENOUGH?
C'MON-- GET OUT THERE AND FINISH THIS UP!
WHERE THEY AT?
MAX. IT'S PYTHON.
SOMEONE TOOK STEELE.
GO BLACK. SHUT DOWN ALL COMMUNICATIONS IN OR OUT...
"...WE'VE GOT INTRUDERS."
C'MON, STEELE-- HOLD ON!
›KOFF‹ KOFF‹ HAVE TO LISTEN...
WAIT TILL WE GET YOU STABILIZED AT BASE.
ANT-MAN, CALL WIDOW-- PYMPORTER US OUT OF HERE.
BAD NEWS, BOSS. ALL LINES ARE DEAD. ALL RADIO FREQUENCIES SCRAMBLED.
THEY KNOW WE'RE HERE.
DOESN'T MATTER ›KOFF‹ LISTEN TO ME-- MAX HAS TWO OF THE CROWNS ›KOFF‹
IF HE GETS THAT THIRD CROWN--
PROMISE ME.
DON'T LET...
...DON'T...

YOU.
YOU LIKE TO TORTURE PEOPLE?
MURGHLE!
ME TOO.

WHO'S BRINGING THE THIRD CROWN AND WHERE IS HE?
T-THE DUDE WANTED MORE MONEY--
B-BOSS SENT OUT A BUNCH OF US TO FIND HIM, BUT-- BUT--
I AIN'T GOING DOWN THERE!
I AIN'T GOING ANYWHERE NEAR THAT PLACE!
WHERE?!
THE HOLE! MILE DOWN--THE CENTER OF TOWN.
ATOM-SMASHER GOT IN A FIGHT WITH MOLECULE MAN--BLEW IT OPEN--T-THEY BUILT A CITY DOWN THERE!
WORST PLACE IN THE WHOLE WORLD!
WHO'S GOT THE CROWN?
H-HE'LL KILL ME. I SAY HIS NAME...I'M DEAD.
YOU'RE DEAD IF YOU DON'T.
O-OKAY, MAN-- T-TASKMASTER.
FINE.

NO!
WHAT HAVE I TOLD YOU?!
NOT MUCH. I MOSTLY GET THE IMPRESSION YOU DON'T WANT ME AROUND.
AVENGERS *DON'T* KILL.
THIS TRASH TORTURED AND KILLED A MAN UNDER *YOUR* COMMAND! *A WAR HERO!*
I'VE READ YOUR FILES, BARTON.
I KNOW WHAT YOU'VE DONE--
WE'VE ALL MADE MISTAKES, THOMPSON.
THE EXCEPTIONS DON'T HAVE TO BE THE NORM.
THAT'S ALL HE'S SAYING.
I WASN'T TALKING TO YOU, *DIRTBAG.*
WELL, I *WAS* TALKING TO YOU, JARHEAD.
THERE'S ONE CLEAR LINE SEPARATING US FROM THE *MONSTERS* IN THIS PLACE-- AND WE *DON'T* CROSS IT.
ERIC UNDERSTANDS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN AVENGER. WE'RE NOT MERCENARIES. YOU NEED TO GET IT THROUGH YOUR HEAD.
IF YOU EVER FALL IN COMBAT, I'LL BE SURE TO.
GIVEN THE FEAR IN THAT CLOWN'S VOICE WHEN HE TOLD US WHERE WE'RE HEADED...

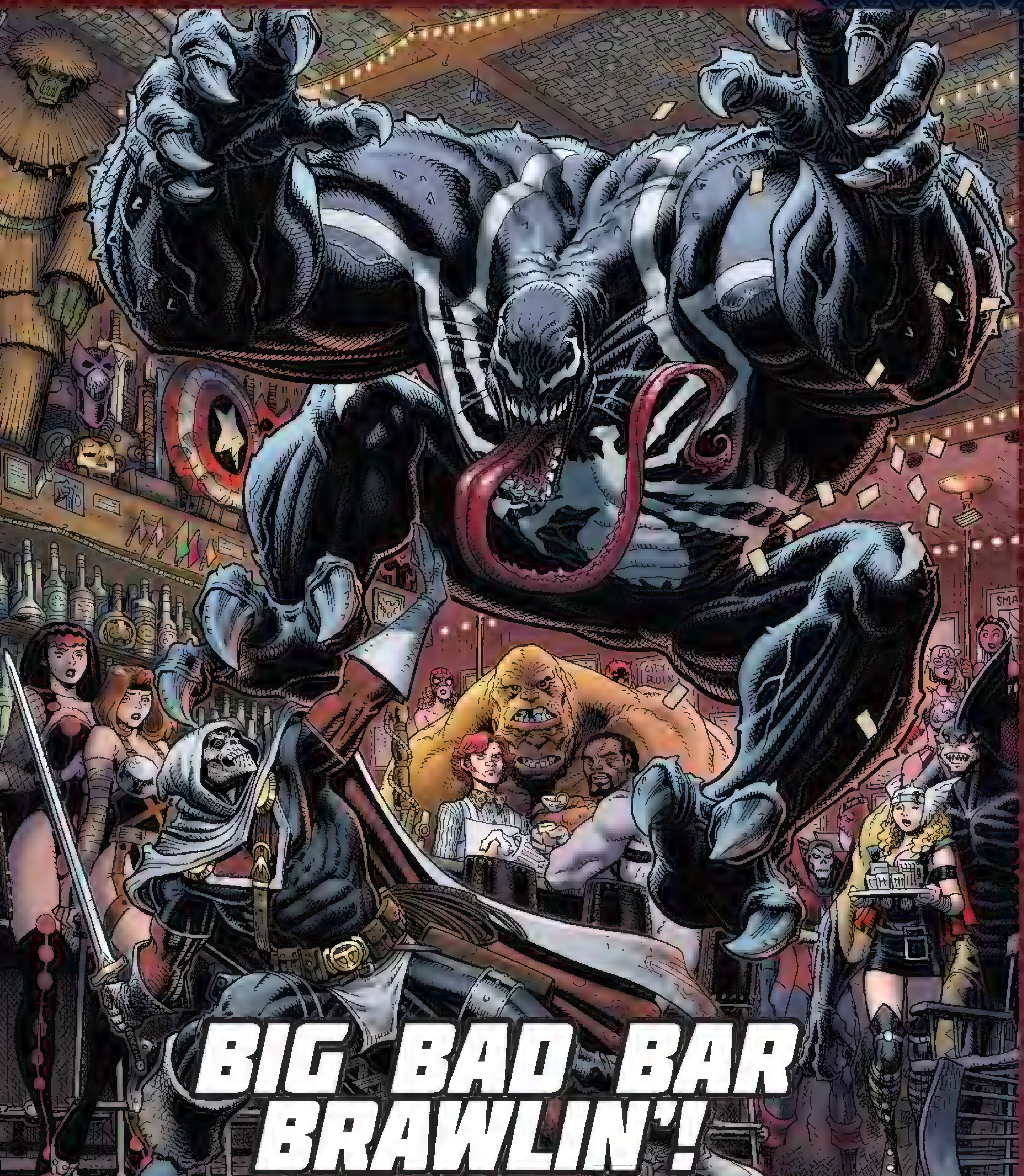
"...THAT MIGHT BE SOON."
YOU SURE THIS IS SMART?
I HEAR THE WRECKING CREW JUST SHOWS UP AND PICKS FIGHTS.
PLACE IS ABOVE OUR PAY GRADE...WE SHOULDN'T BE GOIN' DOWN HERE.
FOR A GUY NAMED "OX," YOU SURE COULD STAND TO GROW A PAIR.
THINK ABOUT IT. THEY'LL LIKELY RESPECT US FOR STEPPING FOOT IN THE PLACE.
YEAH. YEAH, MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT. I MEAN...
HOW BAD COULD IT REALLY BE...
WE'RE GOING TO EARN OUR NAMES JUST BEING SEEN HERE.
THE HOLE
YOU PRESSED MY LAST NERVE, TIGER SHARK!
AND MOST IMPORTANTLY...
...WE'RE GOING TO HAVE FUN.

LOT OF HEAD ON THAT LAST POUR, ARCADE.
YOU'LL BE LUCKY TO LEAVE WITH YOURS IF YOU KEEP GRIPING IN MY JOINT, VECTOR.
BREEP BREEP
YOU GONNA GET THAT PHONE, BABY?
FIFTH CALL. MAXO IS ONE EAGER BEAVER. LET 'IM SWEAT IT.
HE CALLS AGAIN--I'LL KNOW I CAN TRIPLE THE PRICE.
MEANS A BIGGER TIP FOR YOU.
TATTERS!
SKIP THE DANCE AN' TAKE OFF THEM PANTS!
OH, YOU.
HEY! WHAT'S THIS?!
GET THE PARTY BACK UP AND RUNNING!
YOU KOOKS LOOK LIKE SOMEONE JUST...

...CRAPPED ON YOUR GRAVES.
FFACCE USS.
ONE SEC.
MAXX SSEND--WWE GETT PACKKAGGE FROMM YYOOU.
THAT SO? MAX SENT *YOU?*
SAME MAX WHO HAPPENS TO BE CALLIN'?
BREEP BREEP
YOU DON'T MIND IF I CHECK WITH HIM, DO YOU, VENOM?

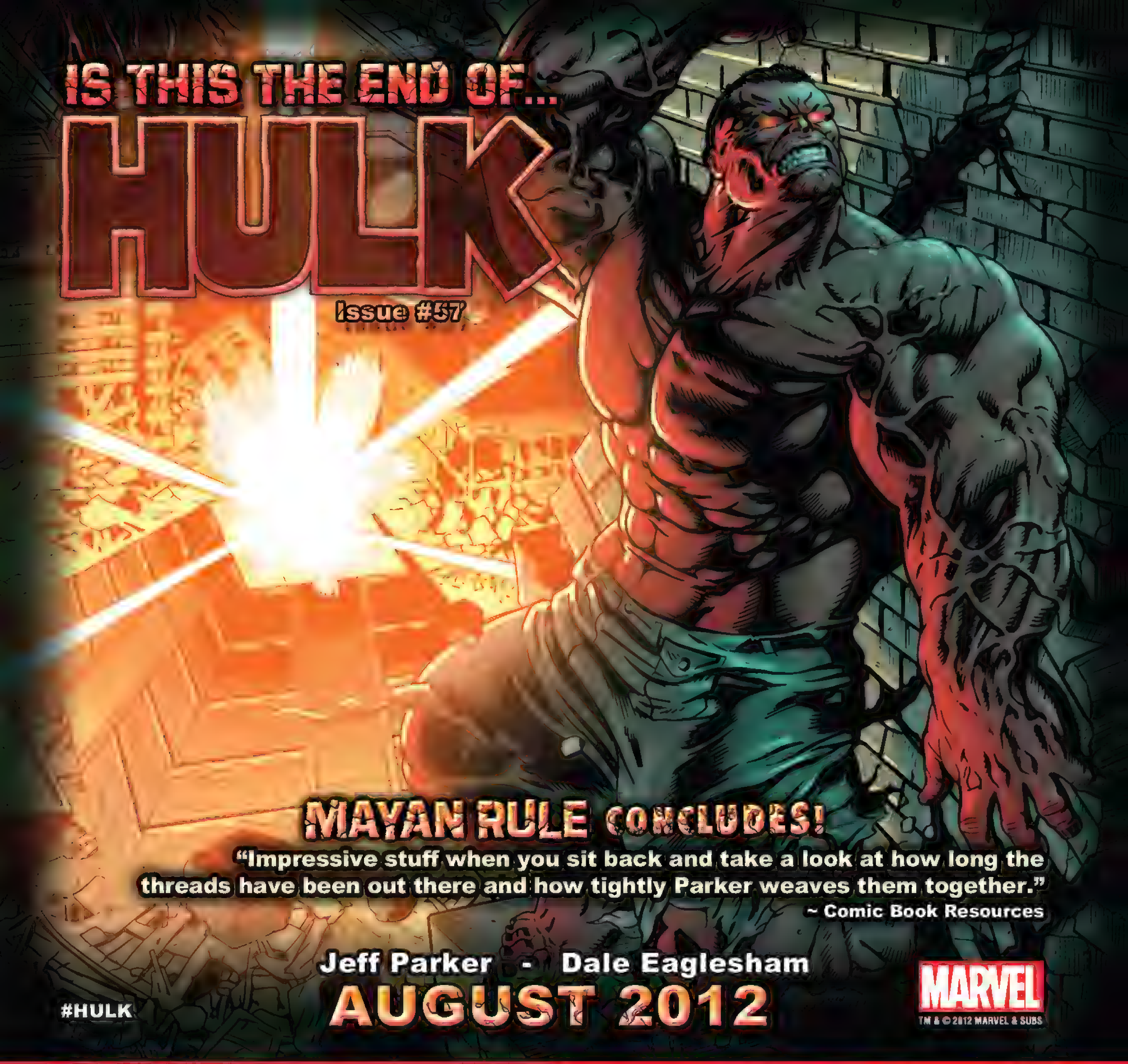
KROOOOM
GIVVE USS THHE PPACKAGGE ORR WE BITE OFF YOURR HHEAD!
OH, I GOT A *PACKAGE* FOR YOU, ALL RIGHT.
CONSIDER YOUR CHALLENGE ACCEPTED.
WHEN YOU FIGHT IN *THE HOLE*...
...YOU FIGHT TO THE *DEATH.*
NEXT ISSUE: VENOM vs. TASKMASTER!

NEXT ISSUE:


CITY RUIN
ADAMS

BIG BAD BAR BRAWLIN'!

SECRET AVENGERS #30


IS THIS THE END OF...
HULK
Issue #57
MAYAN RULE CONCLUDES!
"Impressive stuff when you sit back and take a look at how long the threads have been out there and how tightly Parker weaves them together."
~ Comic Book Resources
Jeff Parker - Dale Eaglesham
AUGUST 2012
#HULK
MARVEL
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hawkeye #1
MATT FRACTION • DAVID AJA
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MARVEL
30
REMENDER
SCALERA
WILSON
SECRET AVENGERS
CITY RUIN
ARTHUR ADAMS

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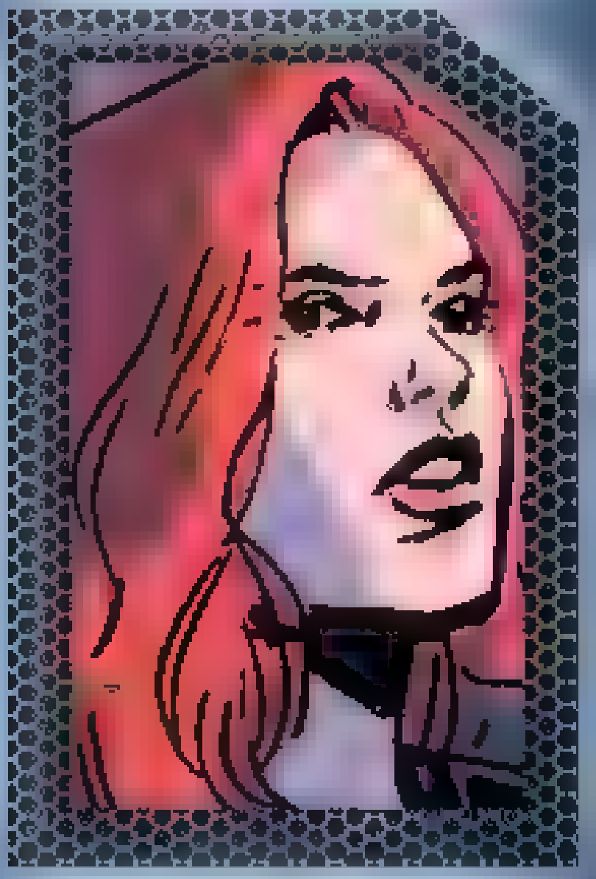
SECRET AVENGERS

SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES

HAWKEYE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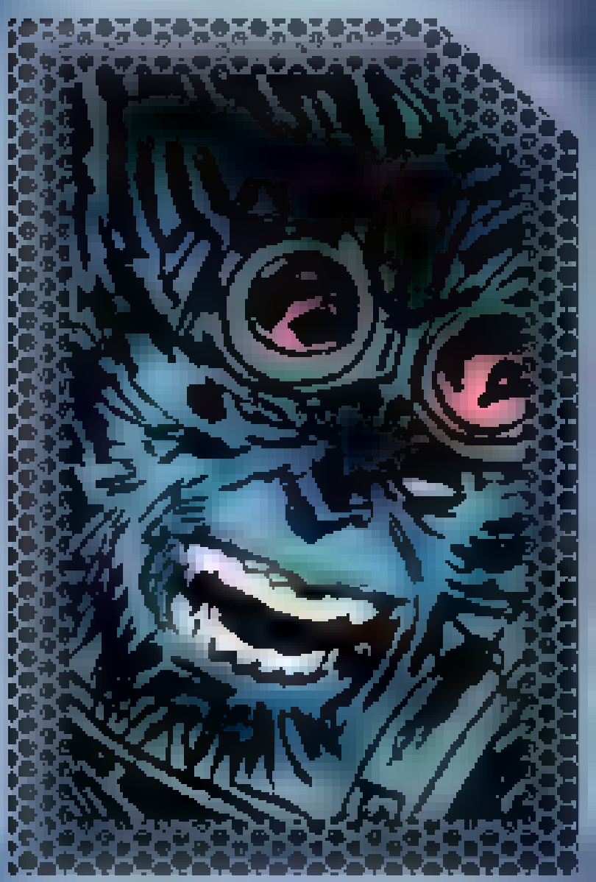
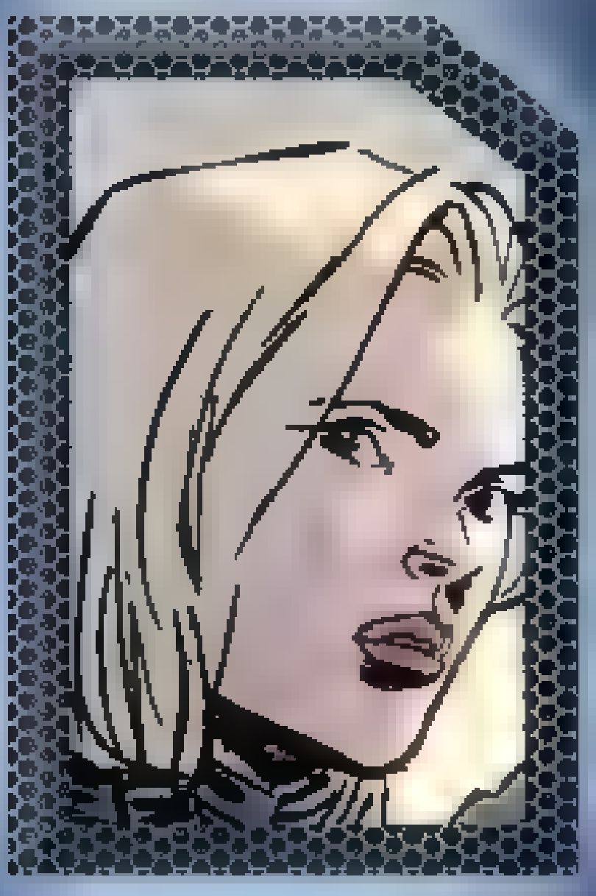

BEAST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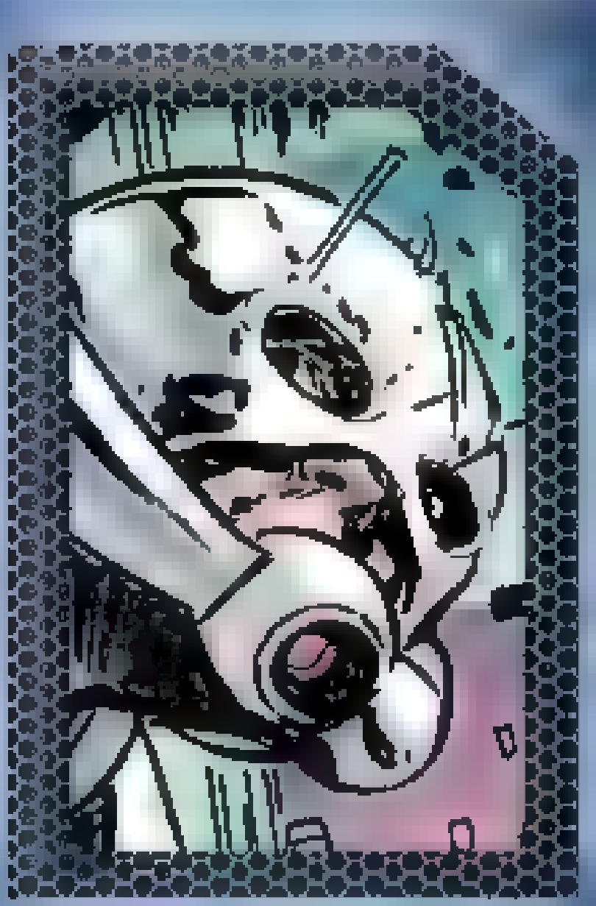
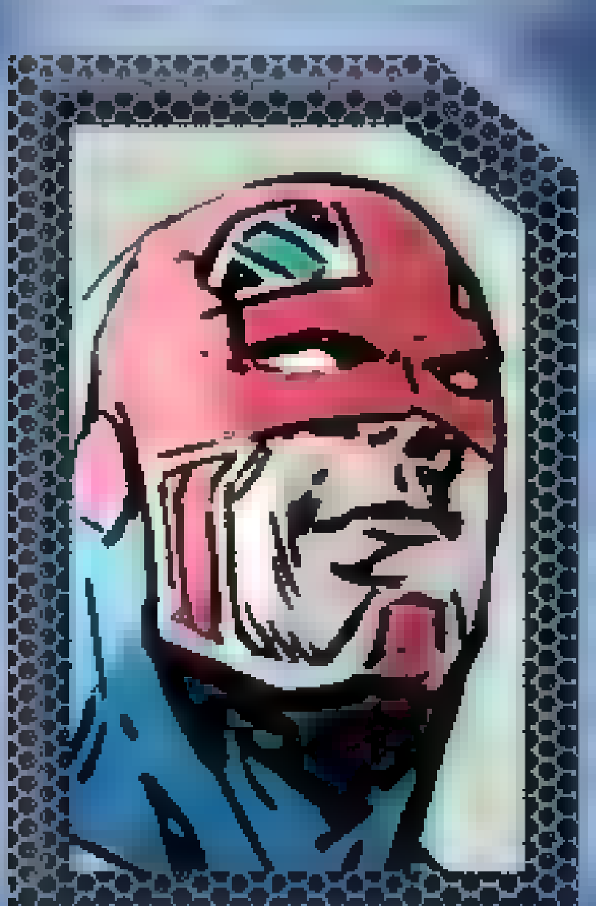
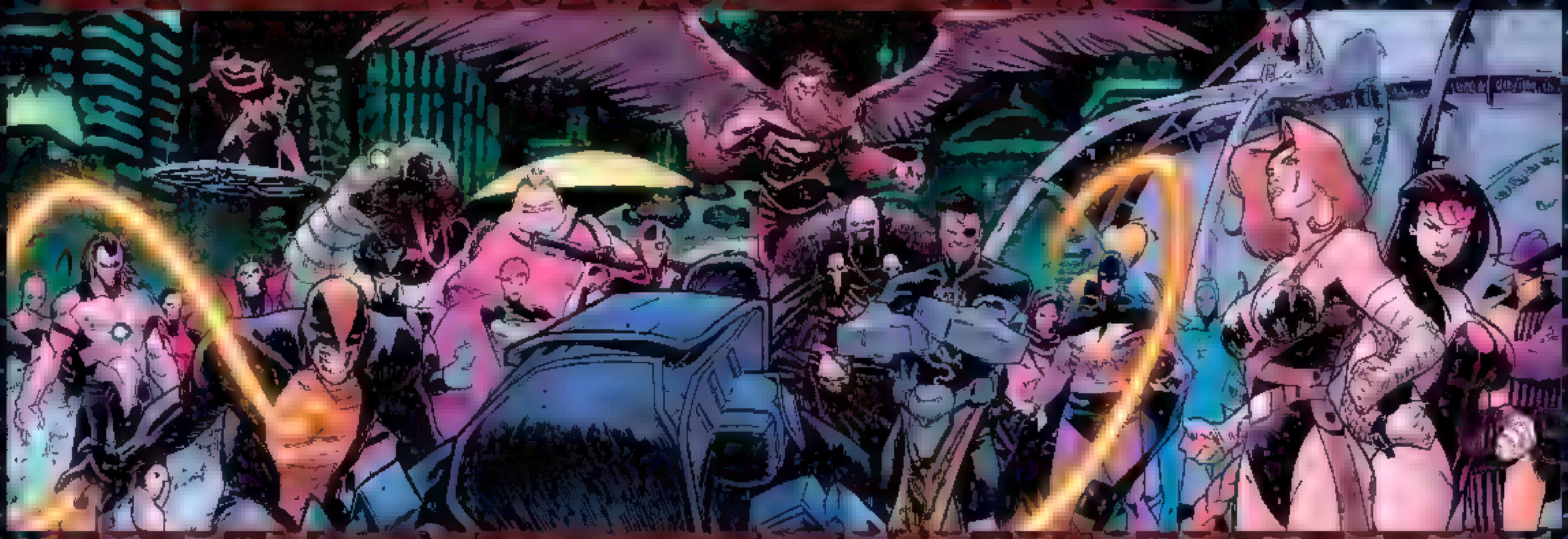

ANT-MAN

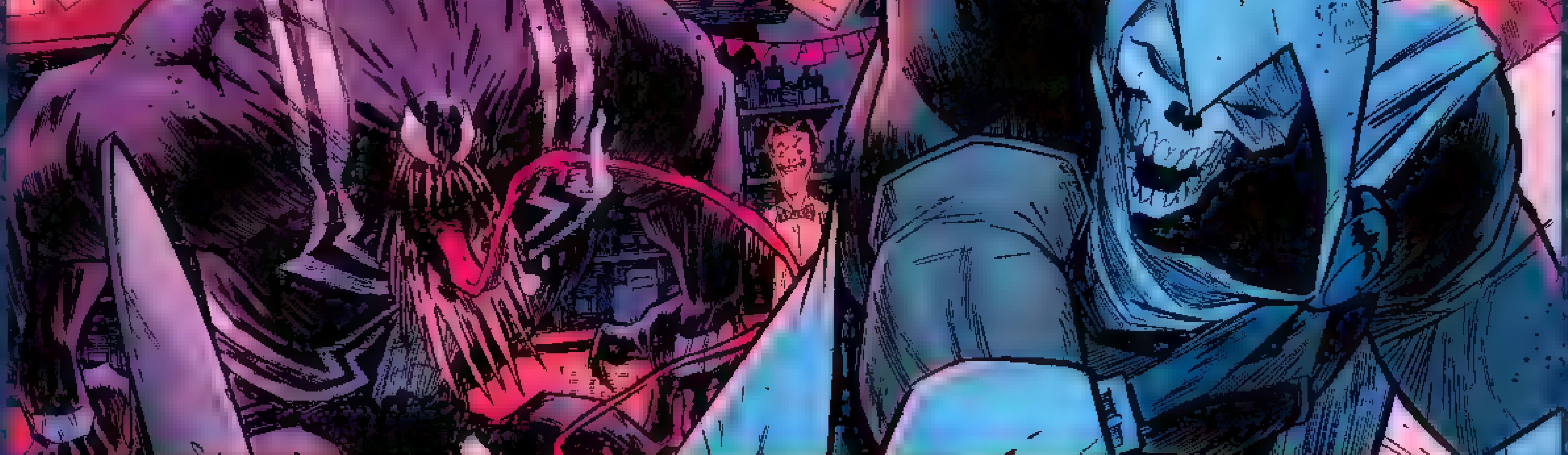

CAPTAIN BRITAIN

VENOM



THE SHADOW COUNCIL HAS RESURFACED. LED BY MAX FURY, A LIFE MODEL DECOY OF SUPERSPY NICK FURY THAT HAS GAINED SENTIENCE. OPERATING OUT OF THE RED LIGHT NATION OF BAGALIA, MAX INITIATED AN OPEN CALL FOR VILLAINS TO JOIN THE NEW MASTERS OF EVIL, RECRUITING HUNDREDS OF MEMBERS. HE SEEKS THREE MYSTICAL CROWNS TO GIVE HIM GREAT POWER. THE SERPENT CROWN AND THE CROWN OF THORNS ARE ALREADY IN HIS POSSESSION. THE FINAL CROWN, THE CROWN OF WOLVES, IS IN THE HANDS OF THE MERCENARY TASKMASTER.

THE SECRET AVENGERS WERE TIPPED OFF TO THE LOCATION OF THE CROWN OF WOLVES BY JOHN STEELE, THE ORIGINAL SUPER SOLDIER, JUST BEFORE HE WAS DISCOVERED AS A DOUBLE AGENT BY THE SHADOW COUNCIL AND MURDERED. HAWKEYE ORGANIZED A SMALL TEAM TO INTERCEPT THE CROWN USING VENOM, WITH HIS REPUTATION AS A VILLAIN, FOR COVER. BUT TASKMASTER WAS NOT INTIMIDATED, AND CALLED OUT VENOM IN A CITY FULL OF THE MOST DANGEROUS CRIMINALS ALIVE.



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BAGALIA
GOT A REPORT IN FROM YOUR SHADOW COUNCIL CLUSTER IN MOSCOW, MAX.
WE GOT A BIT MORE COLOR ON THE RASPUTIN THING.
AND?
IT WAS THE **ASGARDIAN BROAD** WITH THE **FLYING HORSE** TOOK DOWN RASPUTIN.
THE SAME WOMAN WHO DISAPPEARED TUTANKHAMEN'S SKYPYRAMID OVER CAIRO?
SEEMS SHE HAD A COMRADE, GET THIS, WEARING THE **VENOM SYMBIOTE...** HE WAS PLAYING ROUGH WITH OUR ASSOCIATES.
VENOM? THAT DOESN'T MAKE ANY KIND OF SENSE, WHIPLASH.
WELL, **WHOEVER** THEY ARE, THEY'VE ABSCONDED WITH MR. STEELE, AND WILL SOON BE AFTER TASKMASTER AND MY **CROWN OF WOLVES.**
THE MASTERS OF EVIL HAVE BEEN TOLD TO LOCATE THE MERCENARY.
AND, **SOMEHOW,** WITH **HUNDREDS** OF MEMBERS ACROSS THE CITY, **NONE** HAVE?
THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH A NATION FULL OF CRIMINALS, BOSS...

"...THUGS ARE NOT RENOWNED FOR THEIR LOVE OF SNITCHIN'."
THE HOLE
KRAKOOOM
YOU'VE BROKEN THE FIRST RULE OF THE NEGOTIATION, STUPID.
I KNOW *WHAT* YOU WANT, AND THAT YOU WANT IT *BADLY.*
WHAT I DON'T KNOW IS WHY SPIDER-MAN'S ARCH-NEMESIS IS SO DAMN EAGER TO GET HIS HANDS ON *MAXO'S PACKAGE.*
GHRAGHH!
YOU GOT MY CURIOSITY *PIQUED.*
ONCE I PRY YOU OUT OF THAT ALIEN GOO--
WHOOOSH
GHRAGHH!
WE'RE GOING TO HAVE THE *MOST* UNPLEASANT Q AND A OF YOUR LIFE.
HE CAN'T MATCH THE TASKMASTER'S SPEED-- *WE HAVE TO HELP HIM, HAWKEYE!*
IF *THE AVENGERS* HELP *VENOM,* EVERY NUT JOB DOWN THERE IS GOING TO JOIN IN.
THE INFORMATION STEELE *DIED* TO BRING US WILL BE FOR *NOTHING,* AND MAX FURY WILL HAVE ALL THREE CROWNS.
LIKE IT OR NOT, VALKYRIE...
...WE *CAN'T* BE SEEN HELPING HIM.

GHRAGH--!
NOW, I GOT MYSELF A SWEET OL' PHOTO-REFLEXIVE MEMORY.
AND I'VE FOUGHT SPIDER-MAN BEFORE.
I CAN MIMIC HIS FIGHTING STYLE PERFECTLY.
THWIPP
BASED ON YOUR TRACK RECORD, I'M BETTING IT'S A DAMN NEAR PERFECT TECHNIQUE FOR KICKING YOUR BLACK ASS.
WE CHANGE HOW WE FIGHT!
FINE.
I CAN SEE THE NEGOTIATIONS HAVE DETERIORATED.
KRAOOOM

CAN I BORROW A LIGHT, FIREBRAND?
GHAK--?!
SHRKK
BEEN TRYING TO QUIT-- BUT YOU KNOW HOW IT IS.
SEE, THE **SHREWD** TACTICIAN KNOWS, WHEN ENTERING INTO NEGOTIATIONS FROM A POSITION OF **WEAKNESS**--
KAKK-- AKK--
--HAVE AN ACE UP THE SLEEVE.
LIKE KNOWING THAT SYMBIOTE YOU'RE SPORTING CAN'T STAND FIRE.
SHROOOSH
RGWAKK!
COMING IN HERE LIKE YOU'RE THE KING DING-DONG OF POO-POO MOUNTAIN.
GETTING YOUR **ASS** HANDED TO YOU IN FRONT OF YOUR **PEERS**, EVERYONE **LAUGHING** AT YOU.
EMBARRASSING.

NOW, JUST YOU SAY UNCLE AND I'LL PLANT YOU IN THE GROUN--GH--GHRAGH!
FREAKIN' HELL--WHA--
WHAAHHAHAH
THE HELL--HAVE YOU--
GHRAGHH!
HURTS! HURTS REALLY BAD!
TWOK
GET IT OUT!
MAKE IT STOP!
TWHOMP

HAWKEYE, I'VE DONE ALL I CAN, COMING BACK.
GOOD STUFF, ANT-MAN. YOU BOUGHT VENOM SOME TIME.
ARCADE, WHAT KINDA ACTION YOU TAKE ON ME LOSIN'?
TEN TO ONE.
WE'LL SPLIT THE WINNINGS WHEN I GET BACK.
REST O' YOU, LISTEN GOOD.
I'M PAYING A COOL MILLION TO ANYONE WHO MAKES THAT ALIEN DEAD.
SOLD.
KWOKK
GHRAGHH--!

WISH I COULD STICK AROUND AND WATCH, BUT WITH SO MANY NEWLY INTERESTED BIDDERS FOR THE PRIZE--
--IT'S TIME TO REOPEN NEGOTIATIONS WITH EL MAXO.
I'LL SUMMON ARAGORN!
NO, TOO CONSPICUOUS.
THEN PRESENT A BETTER OPTION!
YOU REMEMBER WHEN WE WERE PICKING TEAMMATES AND EVERYONE WAS SO SHOCKED THAT I INSISTED ON HANK PYM?
THAT MAN JUST DOESN'T GET THE RESPECT HE'S OWED.

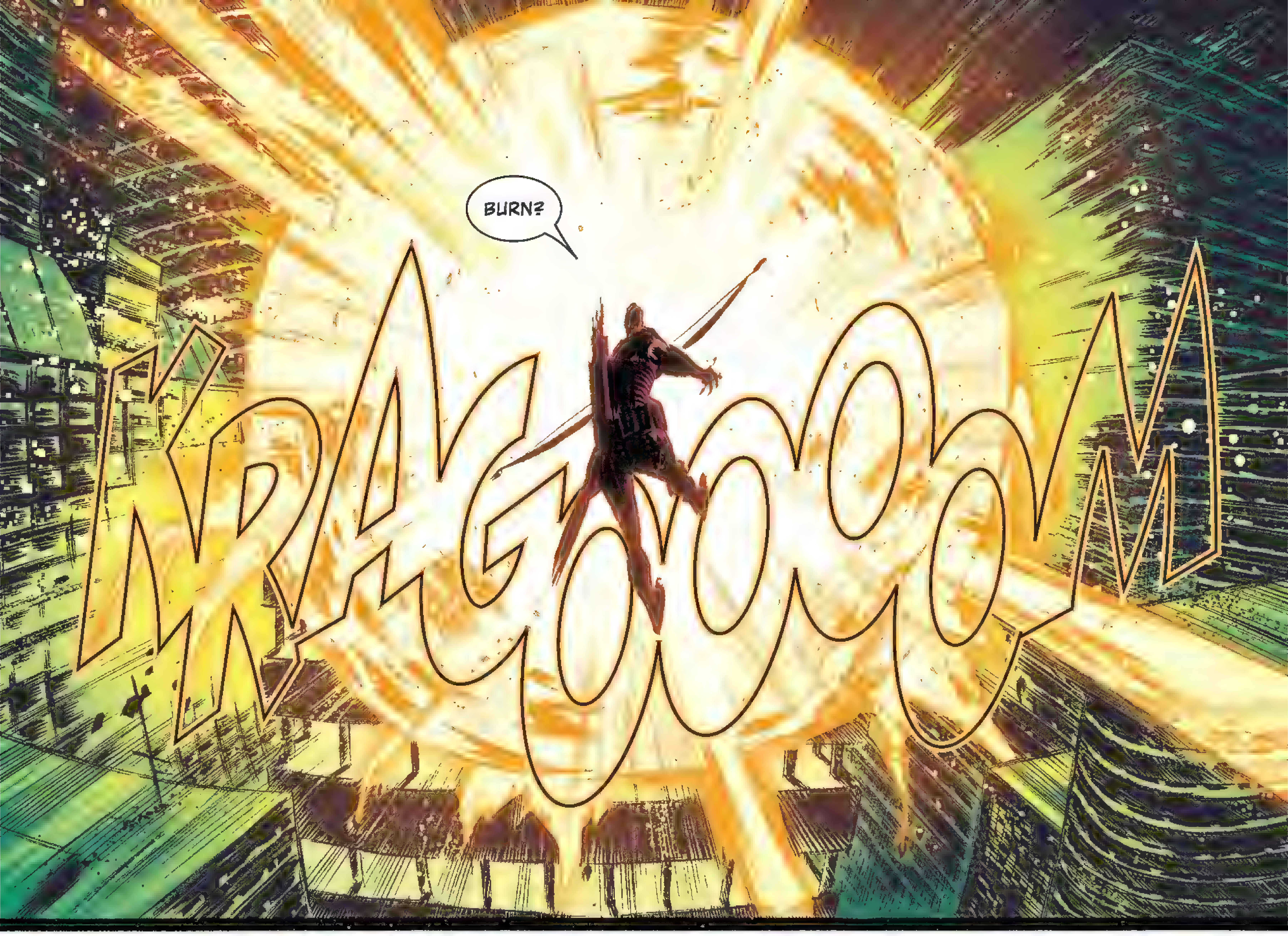
MOVE, TIT-HEADS!
SHNIK
OW--!
SCREEE
HOLY--
SNACKS ARE ON ME!
KRUTUM
CLINT--
I SEE IT.
WREEEEEE
LOOK OUT! IT'S SECOND-RATE THOR LADY AND CAPTAIN LAMEPOWER!

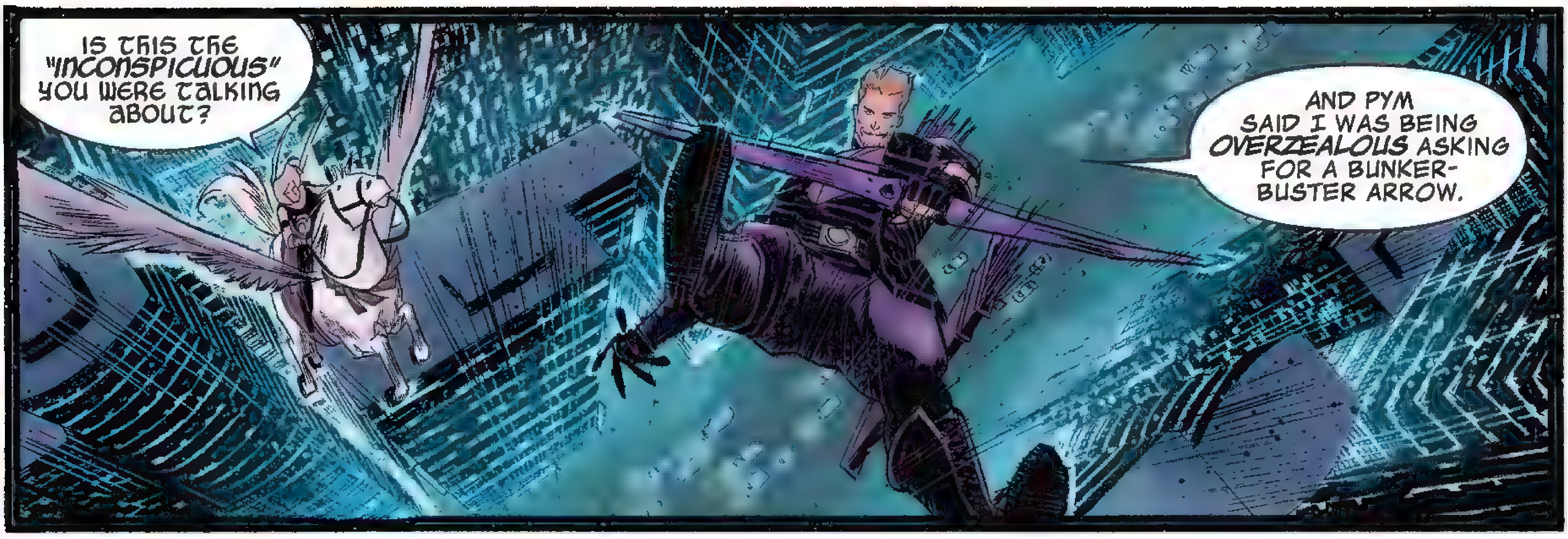
CLINT--!
PURITY IS THE COCOON THAT GROWS POLLUTION--
A CHILD BORN FOR THE FEAST!
SOUNDS LIKE SOMEONE JUST GOT BACK FROM A ROXXON CONVENTION.
HE'S UP BIG-- GHAKK--
THE SPIRIT OF POLLUTION IS THE LIVING RESIDUE OF ALL LIFE!
TURNED BACK TO EAT ITS PARENTS FOR THEIR PRIDE!
WWRENCHH

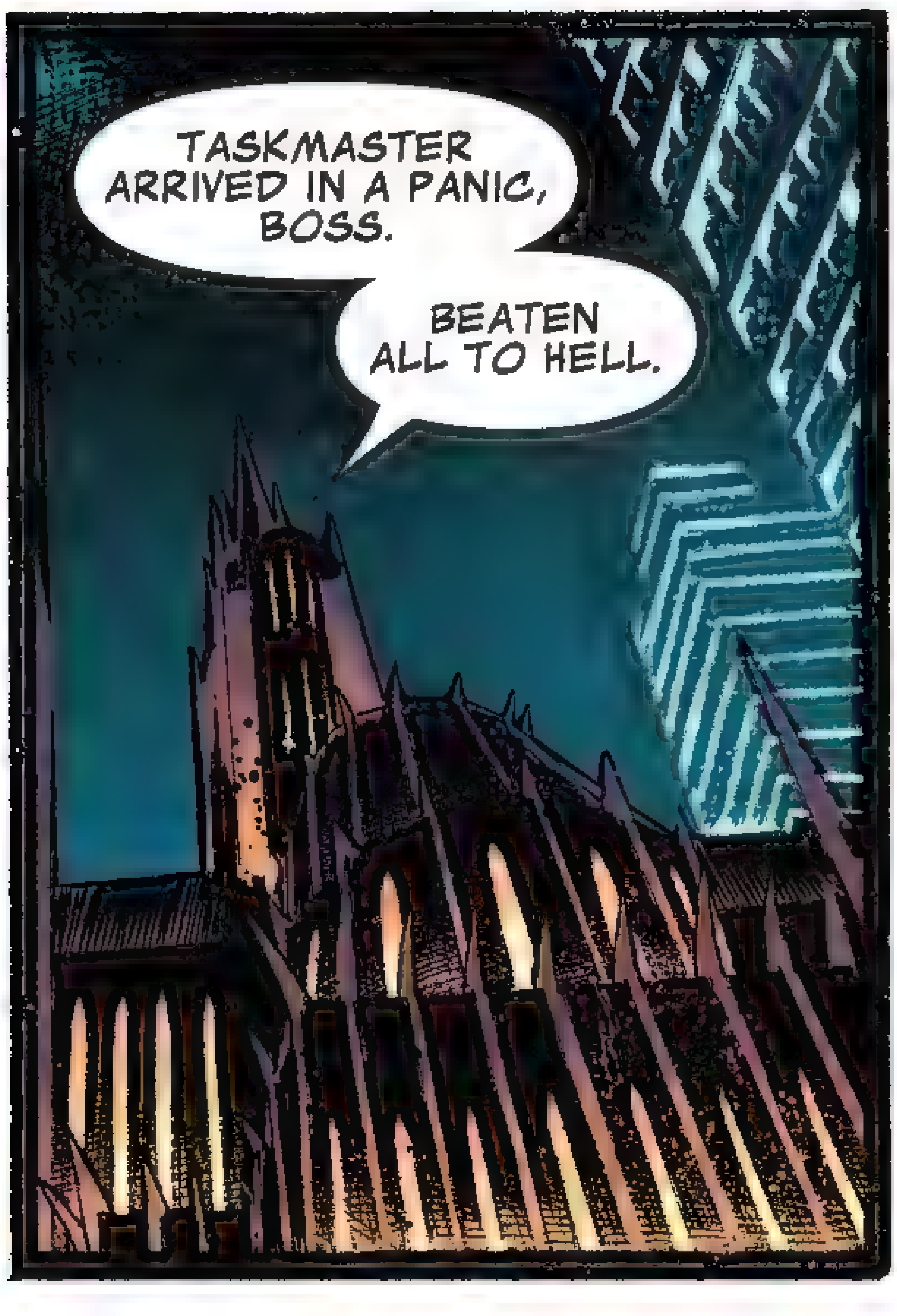
I WILL FEED ON YOUR DECAY--
SKRASHSHSH
THE CUISINE OF POLLUTION!
AND WHEN I AM DONE--
"--WHO WILL CARRY YOUR SOUL HOME?"
BULLSEYE WAS RIGHT, HE'S THE BETTER SHOT.
NEXT ONE GOES THROUGH YOUR NECK, MIMIC.
I'M TASKMASTER.
RIGHT, SORRY, SUPER-ADAPTOID. GOT YOU MIXED--
GHOOOOOOOM
I WILL FIND WHAT IS ROTTEN IN YOU AND NURTURE IT--
CLEANSING YOU IN ITS WASTE!

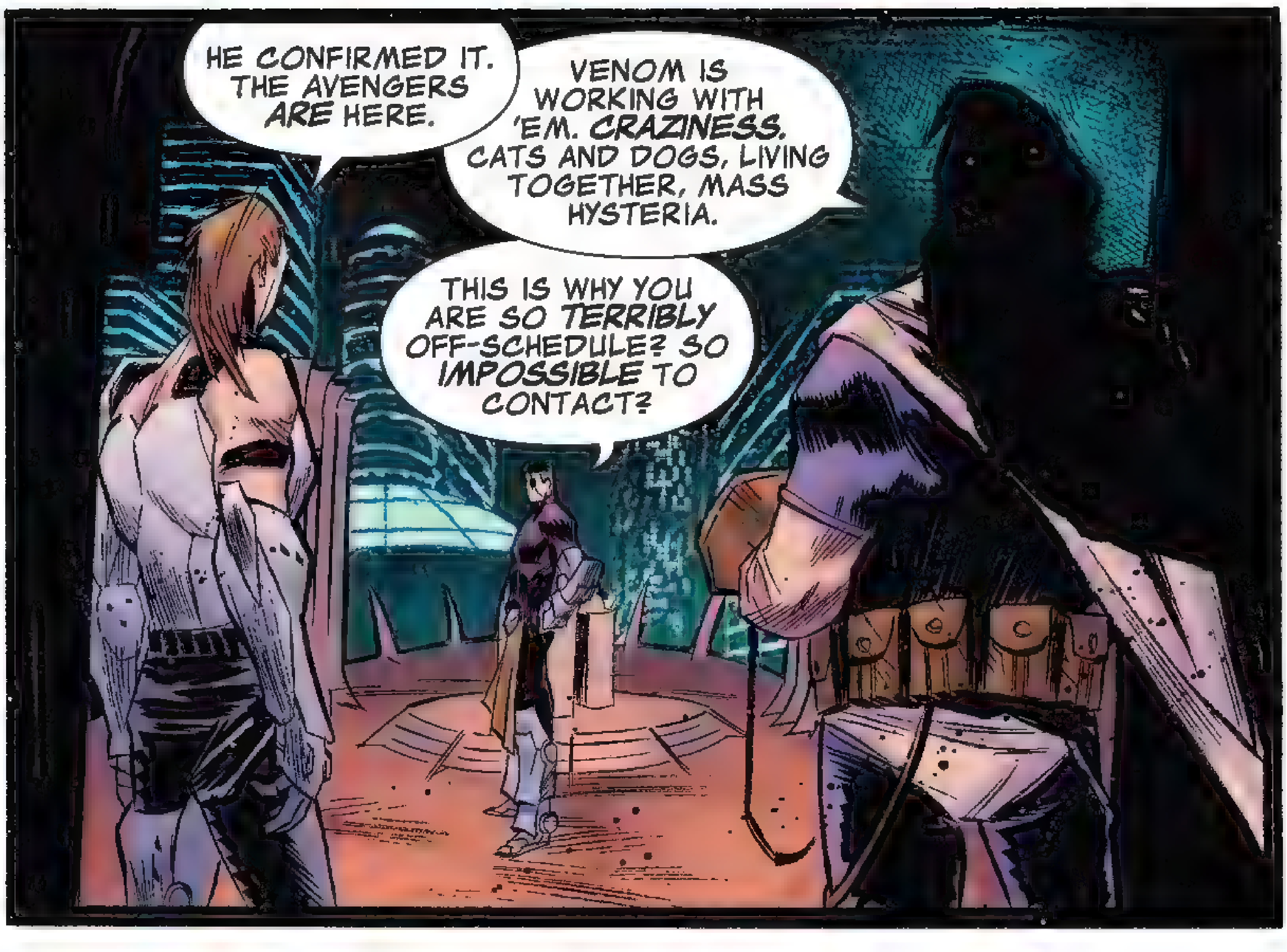
YOUR POWER SOUNDS LIKE A REALLY ILL-CONCEIVED HOME *ENEMA KIT,* VENGEANCE.
AND WHILE I'M SURE YOU ARE GREAT AT *"CLEANSING THE WASTE"* OR WHATEVER--
--IF ANYONE IS GOING TO FIND WHAT IS *ROTTEN* IN ME AND *NURTURE* IT--
--SHE'S GOING TO HAVE FEWER *FIERY SPIKES* ON HER HEAD.
SCREEEEEE

JEST IF YOU WILL--TONIGHT, YOUR SOUL WILL FESTER IN MISDEEDS REMEMBERED!
HMMM-- I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE OTHER OPTIONS.
STILL, IF I HAD TO CHOOSE--
--I'D TAKE "SOUL FESTER" OVER THE "GREEN FIRE ENEMA."
LUCKY FOR ME--
I DON'T HAVE TO MAKE THAT SOPHIE'S CHOICE.
FOOL! YOUR SOUL WILL...


BURN?
KRAGOOOOOM


IS THIS THE "INCONSPICUOUS" YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT?
AND PYM SAID I WAS BEING OVERZEALOUS ASKING FOR A BUNKER-BUSTER ARROW.


TASKMASTER ARRIVED IN A PANIC, BOSS.
BEATEN ALL TO HELL.


HE CONFIRMED IT. THE AVENGERS ARE HERE.
VENOM IS WORKING WITH 'EM. CRAZINESS. CATS AND DOGS, LIVING TOGETHER, MASS HYSTERIA.
THIS IS WHY YOU ARE SO TERRIBLY OFF-SCHEDULE? SO IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTACT?

WELL, IT'S FUNNY, TRUTH IS, I WAS WORKIN' UP THE NERVE TO PROPOSE TO YOU.
KIDS, BIG BELLIES, FIGHTING OVER FURNITURE ARRANGEMENTS, YOU AND ME, IN LOVE, B.F.F. WITH BENEFITS. WHADDYA SAY?
GIVE IT TO ME.
IT'S A GREAT CROWN--REAL NICE CONDITION STILL, SEE?
MAYBE WE COULD JUST SETTLE ON TWICE THE ORIGINAL PRICE AND CALL IT A DAY?
LET'S SKIP RIGHT TO "CALLING IT A DAY."
BLAM BLAM BLAM
SNK
PNG
SKH
RHAAGH--!
THE SHADOW COUNCIL HAS BEEN WORKING TOWARDS THIS FOR OVER A HUNDRED YEARS.
BUT THEIR PLAN WAS FAULTY. THE ARMY THEY WOULD GIVE THE ABYSS WAS WEAK.
MEN WITH GUNS.
KOFF AH... Y-YOU SON OF... HAKK
THORNDRAKE LAUGHED WHEN I TOLD HIM I'D PUBLICLY INVITED ANY VILLAIN WILLING TO COME JOIN THE ALL-NEW MASTERS OF EVIL!
HE OVERESTIMATED YOU PEOPLE.
ASSUMED YOU'D QUESTION THE INVITE. AND, REALLY, WHO AM I TO OFFER MEMBERSHIP IN AN ORGANIZATION I HAVE NO AFFILIATION WITH?
BUT CRIMINALS ARE MOTIVATED AND BLINDED BY THE SAME LOW THINGS.
STATURE, FOR EXAMPLE.
YOUR THIRST FOR REPUTATION IS YOUR UNDOING ALL TOO OFTEN.
KLNKK

YOU'D THINK A **PUBLIC MEMBERSHIP DRIVE** WOULD KILL THE ALLURE. NOT VERY **EXCLUSIVE** THIS WAY, IS IT?
HUNDREDS OF YOU PEOPLE SHOWED UP.
BUT TO JOIN **WHAT?**
UHM...THE MASTERS OF EVIL?
KLOOOM
NO.
YOU CAME HERE FOR **THE ABYSS.** YOU JUST DIDN'T KNOW IT.
THE HELL--? THOSE CROWNS-- THEY'RE ALIVE?!
OLD FRIENDS THAT HAVEN'T BEEN UNITED IN THOUSANDS OF YEARS.
SINCE THE HORROR TIMES-- THE LOST ERA OF NULL.
GAZAKK
W-WHAT THE HELL--?!
NOT HELL.
NOT HEAVEN.
THE ABYSS.
EXISTENCE WITH NO DESIRE. UNIFICATION THROUGH NEGATION.
A BOTTOMLESS FALL INTO A LONG NAP THROUGH ETERNITY.

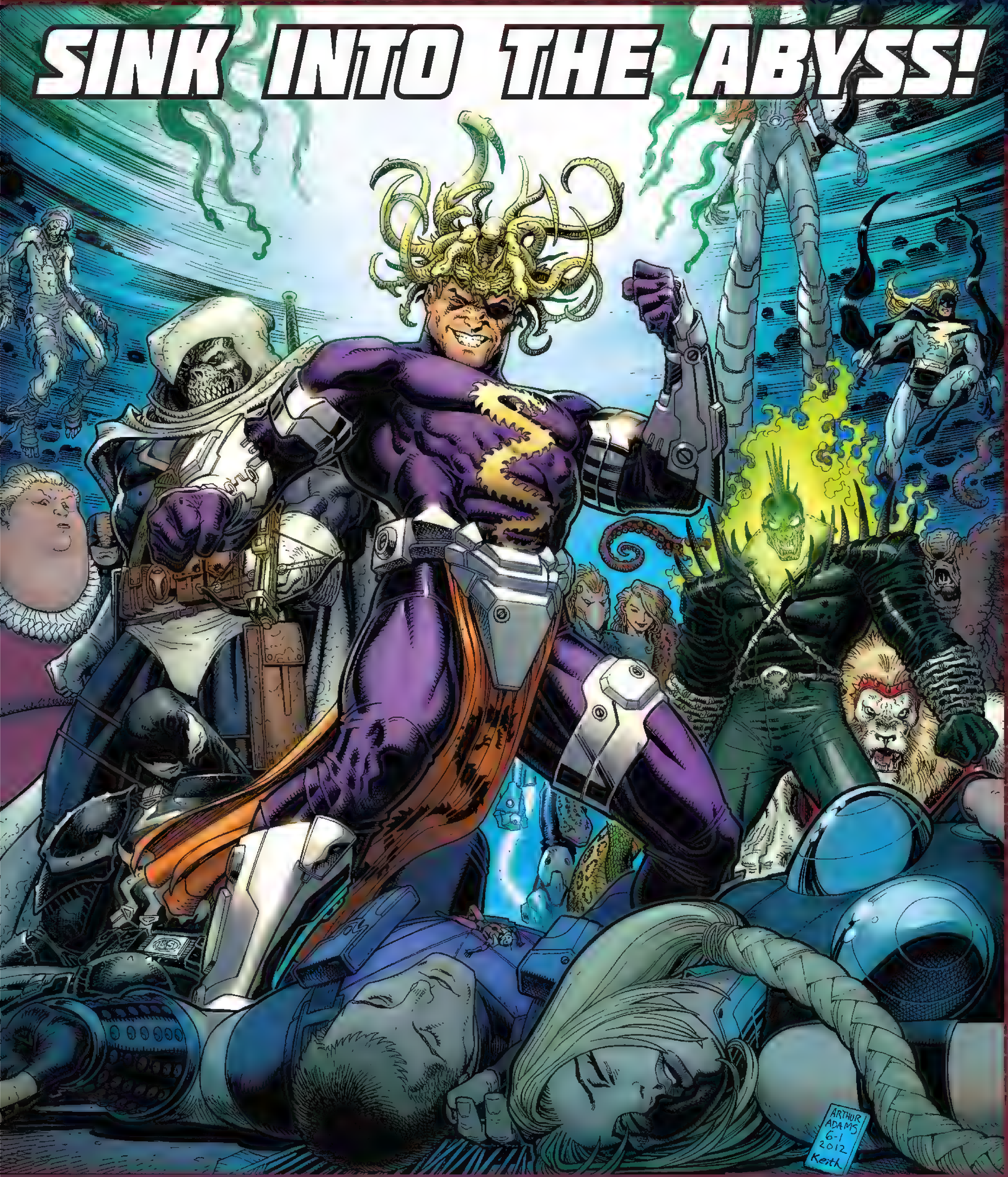
SOUNDS LIKE MY FIRST MARRIAGE.
HMMH--?
WE EVEN HAD "UNIFICATION THROUGH NEGATION" IN THE VOWS.
THIPP
STOP! LISTEN--! MAX IS CRAZY-- HE'S--
GZAAZAKKX
BY UNDERESTIMATING ME, YOU'VE PICKED THE TARGET OF LESSER VALUE.
YOU WILL SOON LEARN TO RESPECT THE VESSEL OF ***THE ABYSS!***

SOON... YOU'LL ALL...
SEE...
NOTHING... I DON'T...I DON'T UNDERSTAND...
YOU'LL UNDERSTAND THIS, MAX.
PLOK
LOOKS LIKE YOUR DEMON SUPER CROWN IS BROKEN.
W-WHY? WHY DIDN'T IT WORK?
I'D GUESS IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE A LIFE-MODEL DECOY--A GUSSIED-UP ROBOT.
NO--NO, I'M MORE THAN THAT, MORE THAN JUST...
WELL, SEEING AS HOW NO MAGIC GENIE POPPED OUT TO SERVE YOU--
MIGHT BE TIME FOR THE TIN-MAN TO ADMIT HE DOESN'T HAVE A SOUL.
NO--NOT AFTER ALL OF THIS--I'M MORE THAN A ROBOT...
...MORE.

YOU ARE NOTHING.
THE ABYSS IS UPON YOU!
MEAT PUPPETS TO NEUTER MANKIND OF THE VERY UGLINESS THEY EMBODY.
WHAT THE--WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
THE ABYSS IS SPREADING!
THOSE WHO DENY THE ABYSS MUST PERISH.
MOVE!

EVERYONE'S EYES--PITCH BLACK--W-WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?
NO CLUE. BUT FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS...
"...IT'S SPREADING."
TO BE CONTINUED...

NEXT ISSUE:



SINK INTO THE ABYSS!

ARTHUR ADAMS 6-1 2012
Keith

SECRET AVENGERS #31

MARVEL

31

REMENDER
SCALERA
WILSON

SECRET AVENGERS®

ARTHUR ADAMS
6-1
2012
Keith

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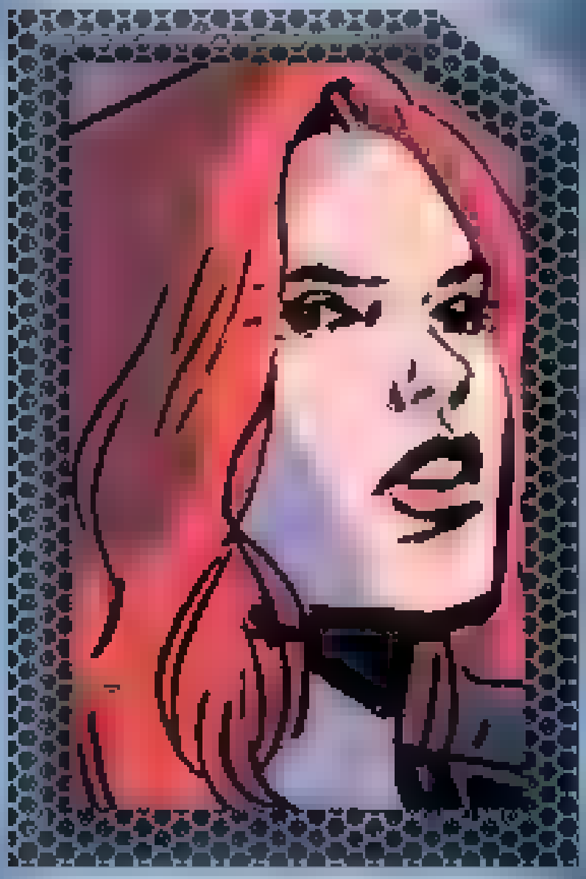
BROUGHT TOGETHER AS A COVERT MISSIONS UNIT BY STEVE ROGERS, A.K.A. CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND BASED ON THE MINIATURIZED LIGHTHOUSE STATION IN ORBIT ABOVE THE EARTH, THE SECRET AVENGERS TAKE ON THE WORLD'S BIGGEST THREATS BEFORE THEY HAPPEN.

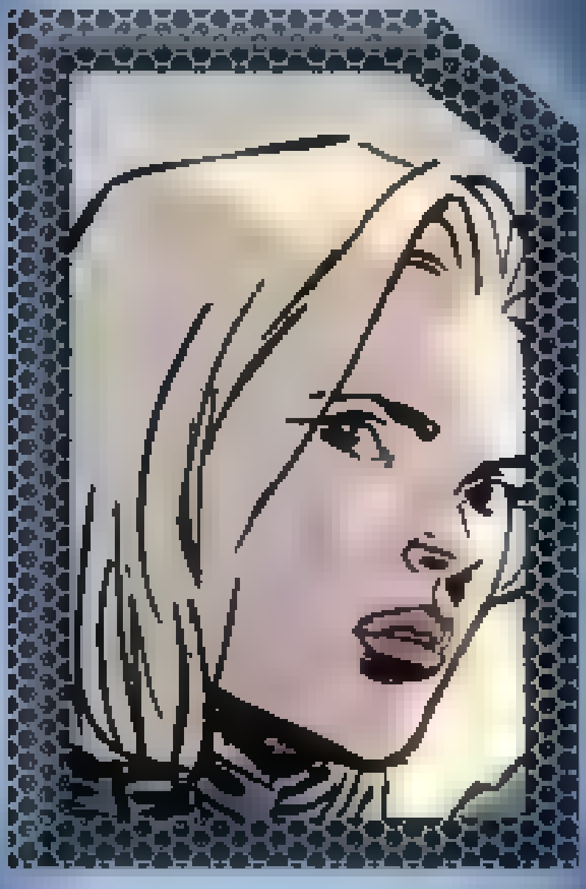
SECRET AVENGERS

INTO THE VOID

HAWKEYE


BLACK WIDOW

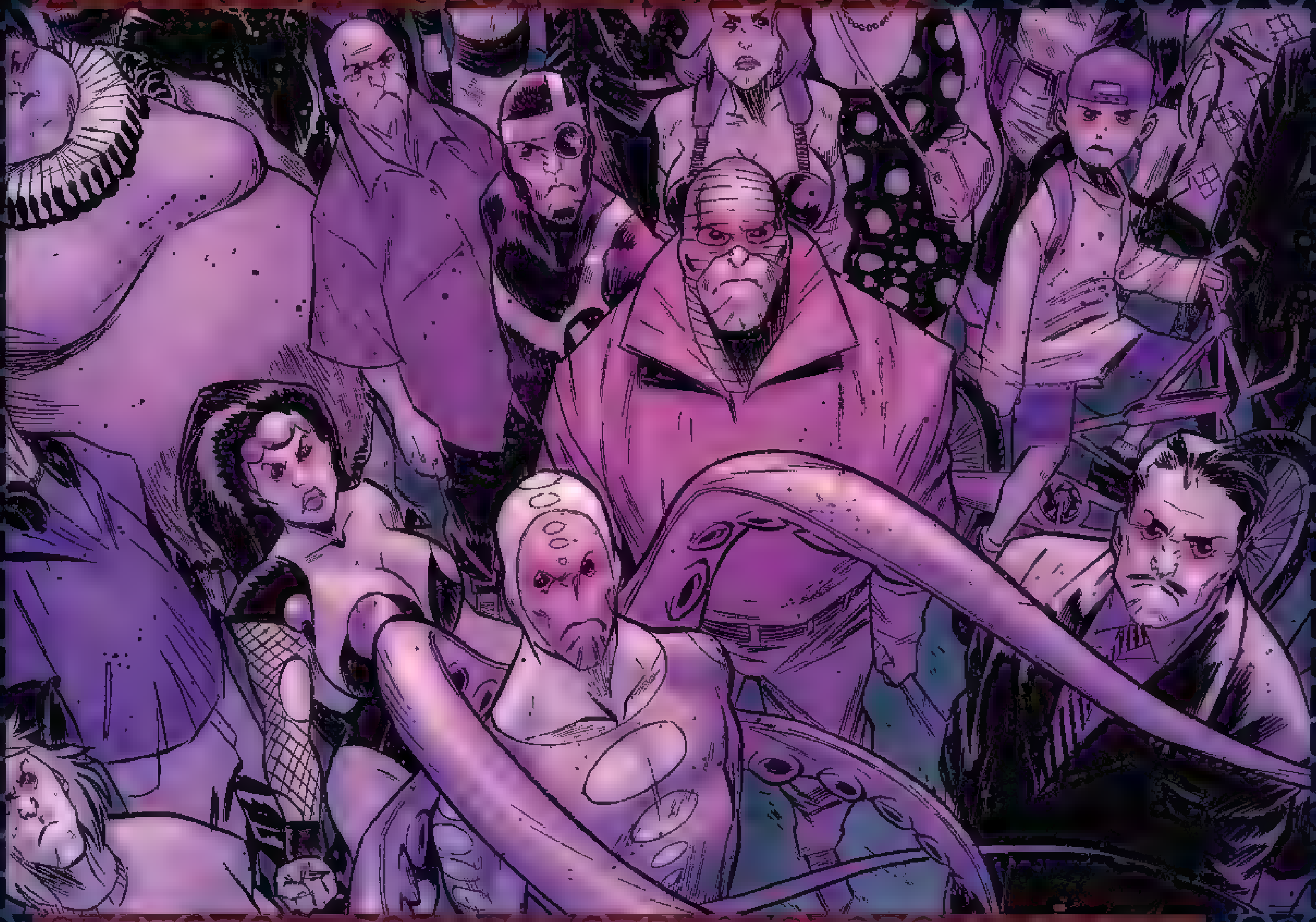
BEAST


VALKYRIE

ANT-MAN

CAPTAIN BRITAIN

VENOM



THE SHADOW COUNCIL HAS RESURFACED, LED BY MAX FURY, A SENTIENT LIFE MODEL DECOY OF SUPERSPY NICK FURY. OPERATING OUT OF THE RED LIGHT NATION OF BAGALIA, MAX INITIATED AN OPEN CALL FOR VILLAINS TO JOIN THE NEW MASTERS OF EVIL. RECRUITING HUNDREDS OF MEMBERS, HE SOUGHT A THREE-PART CROWN THAT WOULD GIVE HIM ACCESS TO A POWERFUL DARK FORCE KNOWN AS THE ABYSS.

MAX RECEIVED THE FINAL PIECE OF THE CROWN FROM THE MERCENARY TASKMASTER, WHOM HE THEN SHOT. HOWEVER, AS A ROBOT, MAX WAS UNABLE TO HARNESS THE CROWN'S POWER. AS HAWKEYE, ANT-MAN, VENOM AND VALKYRIE FOUGHT THE SHADOW COUNCIL, THE WOUNDED TASKMASTER DONNED THE CROWN, UNLEASHING THE ABYSS TO POSSESS HERO AND VILLAIN ALIKE! ONLY VENOM AND THE SECRET DOUBLE-AGENT ANT-MAN REMAIN UNAFFECTED.

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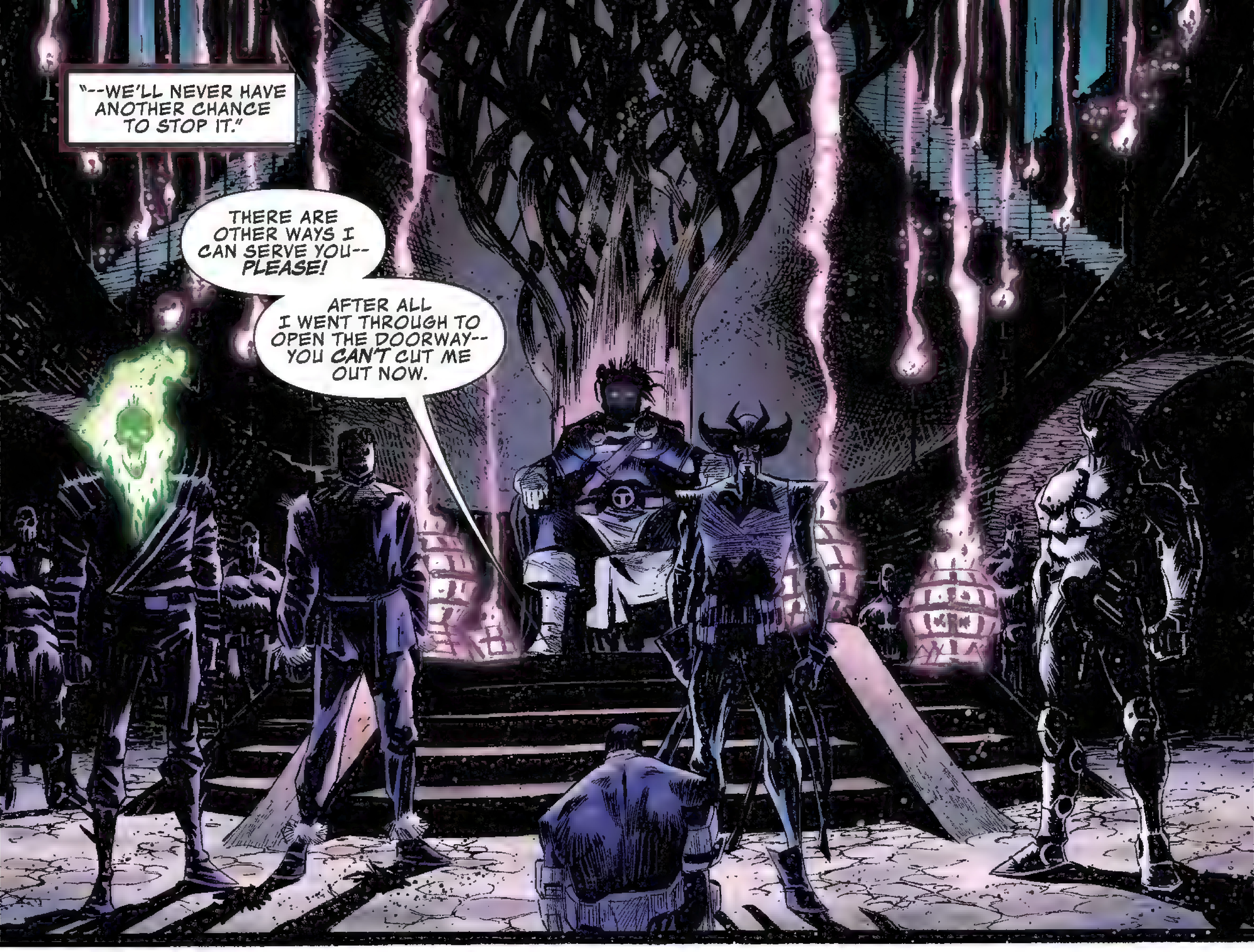
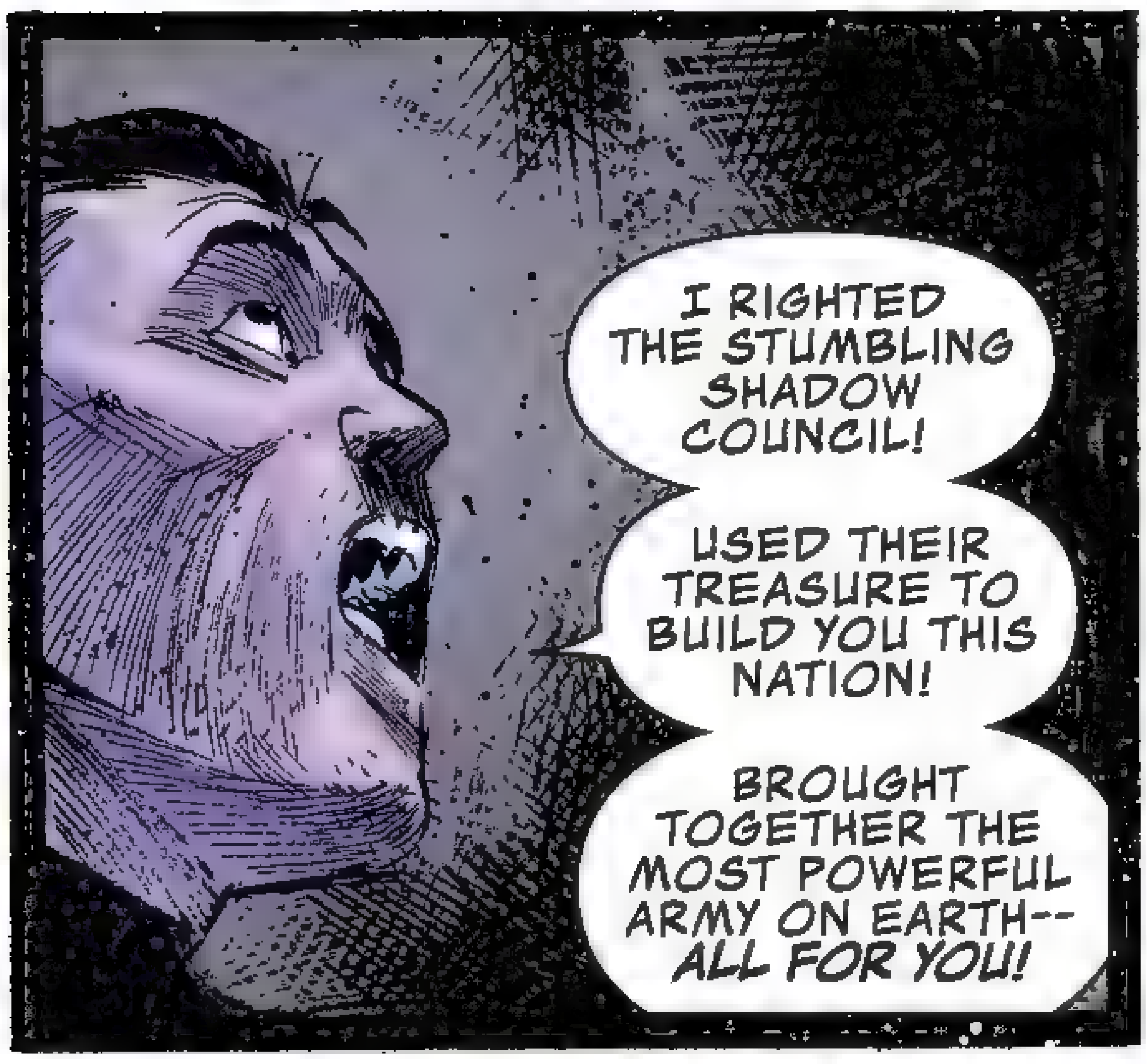
BAGALIA, THE RED LIGHT NATION
YOU WANTED TO BE SPIDER-MAN.
SAVE THE WORLD.
FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT THINGS.
TURNS OUT, WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR--
--SOMETIMES IT ***EXPLODES*** IN YOUR FACE.
THEY'RE STILL JUST SORT OF ROAMING AROUND DIRECTIONLESS.
POSSESSED BY ***THE ABYSS.***
WHATEVER THE ***HELL*** THAT EVEN IS.
WHY HASN'T BLACK WIDOW SENT REINFORCEMENTS?
SHE'S GOTTA BE ABLE TO TELL THAT THIS CITY IS POSSESSED BY SOMETHING THAT IS SPREADING.
ANYONE THEY SEND WILL END UP LIKE HAWKEYE AND VALKYRIE.
YEAH... WONDER HOW I GOT SO ***LUCKY.***
MY SYMBIOTE IS RESISTANT.
SAME THING HAPPENED WHEN RASPUTIN TRIED TO INFECT ME.
MY GUESS IS THE NEUROLOGICAL DAMPENING SERUM MAKES THE SYMBIOTE ACT AS A PROTECTIVE BARRIER.
SPEAKING OF WHICH--TIME FOR MY SHOT.

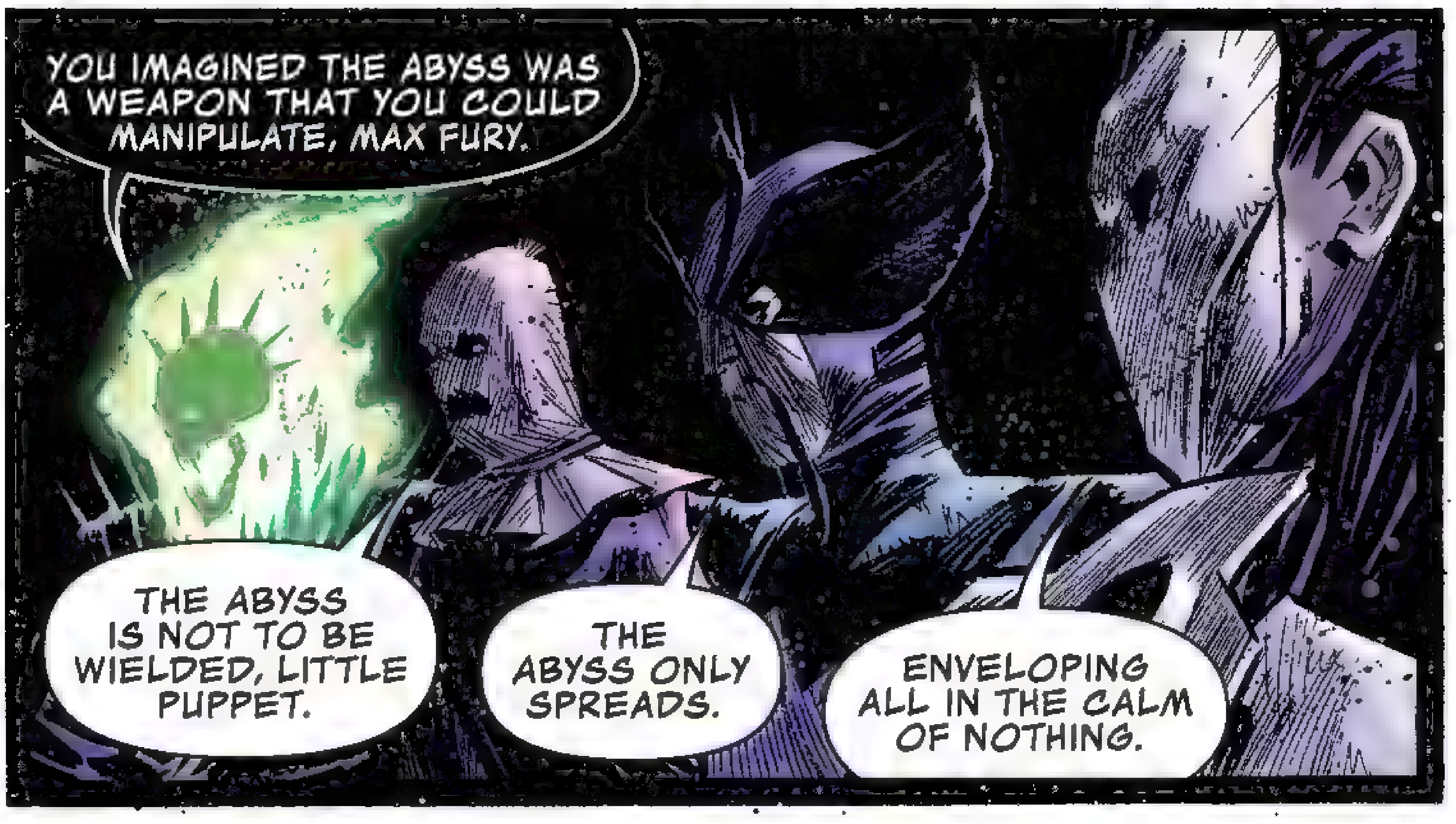
YEAH...BEEN THINKING ABOUT THAT.
MUST BE SOMETHING ABOUT MY ANT-MAN HELMET THAT STAVED IT OFF.
MAYBE THE FREQUENCY I USE TO COMMUNICATE WITH INSECTS?
YEAH...
THAT'S PROBABLY IT.
YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT HER.
WHO?
C'MON, MAN. I'VE SEEN HOW YOU AND VALKYRIE HAVE BEEN LOOKING AT EACH OTHER.
THE WAY YOU TOUCH EACH OTHER ON THE ARM WHENEVER YOU TALK.
IT'S *NOTHING* LIKE THAT.
GOOD. THESE COSTUMED ROMANCES *ALWAYS* END IN TEARS.
AND YOU NEED TO FACE FACTS--SHE'S ON THE *OTHER SIDE* NOW.
GIVEN WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST HERE, YOU WON'T LET *PERSONAL* FEELINGS GET IN THE WAY...
...IF THINGS GO *UGLY?*
THIS PLAGUE WILL *NOT* SPREAD BEYOND THE CITY.
I'LL DO *WHATEVER* I HAVE TO.
YOU'D KILL A TRAITOROUS TEAMMATE...
NOT *TOO* SURPRISING, GIVEN HOW READY YOU WERE TO *MURDER* THAT MANIAC CLOWN.

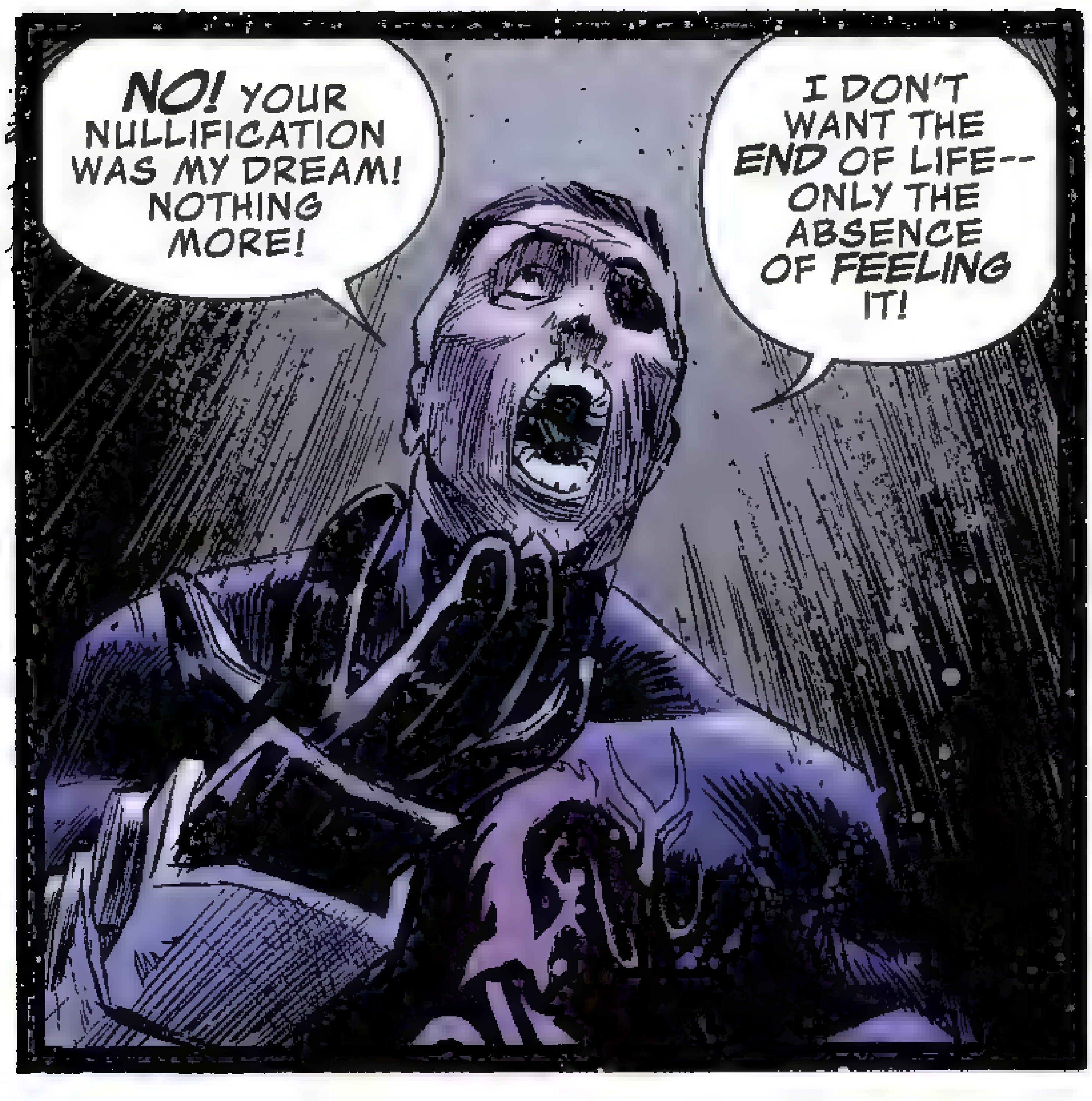
DON'T SELL IT LIKE THAT. I'M *NOT* BLOODTHIRSTY.
I...I LOST SOME FRIENDS IN THE WAR.
SEEING STEELE, ANOTHER DEAD SOLDIER--IT BRINGS OUT THE *NIGHTMARES.*
I LOST CONTROL, IS ALL.
THAT HOW YOU LOST YOUR LEGS? THE WAR?
DOING WHAT ANYONE WOULD HAVE. LIFE OF ANOTHER SOLDIER WAS ON THE LINE.
GOOD GUY TO HAVE ON MY SIDE, THEN.
UNLESS IT'S A PAIR OF **LEGS** YOU NEED.
HEY, MAN--Y-YOU SHOULD COME SEE THIS.
SOMETHING'S UP--
--THEY'RE ON THE MOVE.

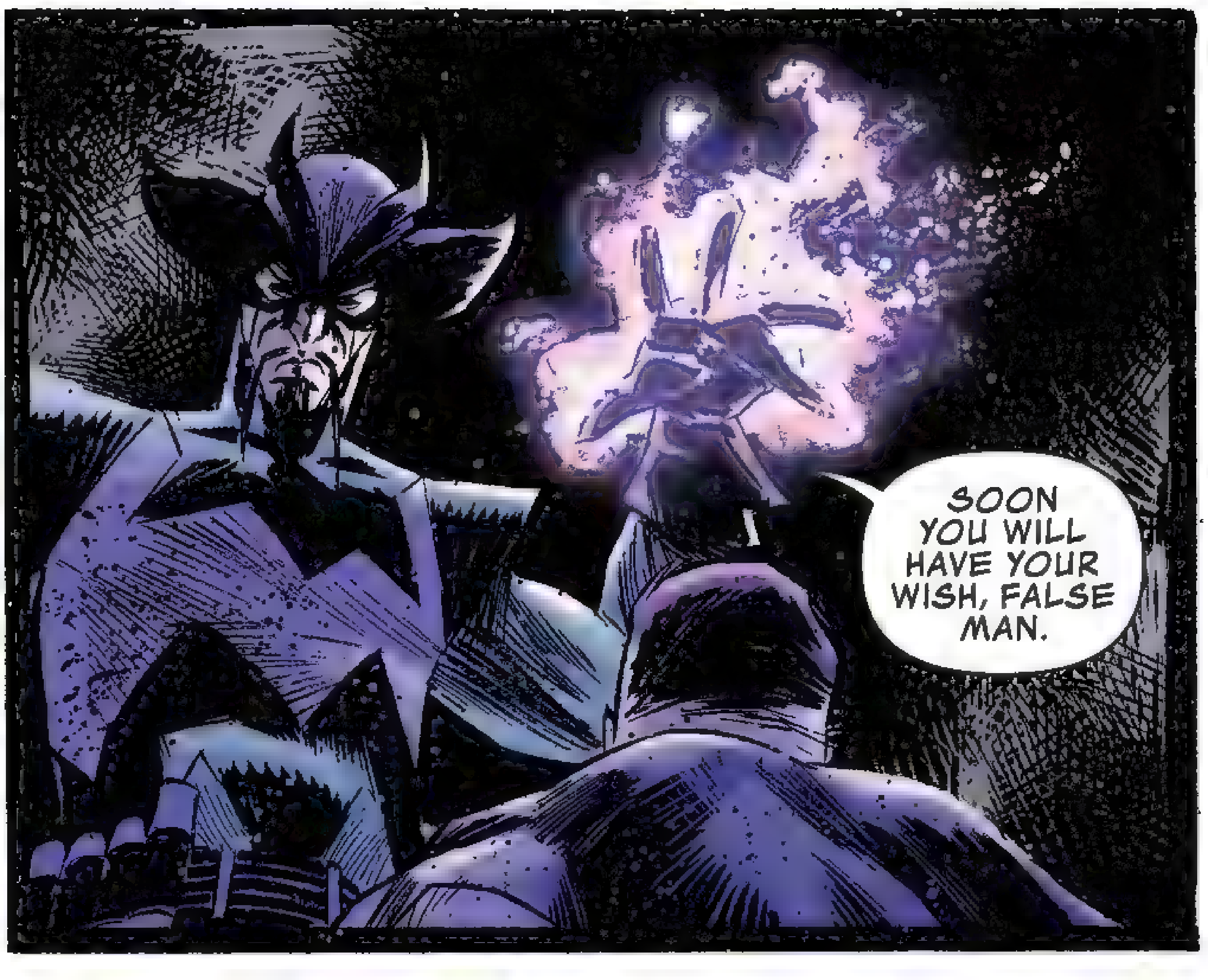
LIGHTHOUSE STATION
THE SHADOW COUNCIL HAS FORMED AN ARMY-SIZED MASTERS OF EVIL.
FROM WHAT WE CAN TELL, THEY'VE ALL BEEN POSSESSED BY THIS "ABYSS" THE COUNCIL WORSHIPS.
WE HAVE AGENTS ON THE GROUND, BUT THERE IS A DISRUPTION FIELD AND...
...I HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THE AWAY TEAM MAY ALSO BE INFECTED.
I'M SORRY, WIDOW. CAPTAIN BRITAIN AND I STUMBLED UPON A HIVE OF ULTRAVISIONS IN MALAYSIA--THE DESCENDANTS ARE UP TO SOMETHING.
WE WON'T BE ABLE TO HELP.
ALERT CAP-- BAGALIA IS NO LONGER A COVERT OPERATION.
THE PRIMARY AVENGERS AREN'T RESPONDING.
SOUNDS BAD--TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS.
DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.
WE'LL BE THERE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
SKRAKK
HURRY UP, BRIAN. IF YOU DON'T GET HERE SOON--
IF THIS INFECTION SPREADS--


"--WE'LL NEVER HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE TO STOP IT."
THERE ARE OTHER WAYS I CAN SERVE YOU-- *PLEASE!*
AFTER ALL I WENT THROUGH TO OPEN THE DOORWAY-- YOU *CAN'T* CUT ME OUT NOW.


I RIGHTED THE STUMBLING SHADOW COUNCIL!
USED THEIR TREASURE TO BUILD YOU THIS NATION!
BROUGHT TOGETHER THE MOST POWERFUL ARMY ON EARTH-- *ALL FOR YOU!*


YOU IMAGINED THE ABYSS WAS A WEAPON THAT YOU COULD MANIPULATE, MAX FURY.
THE ABYSS IS NOT TO BE WIELDED, LITTLE PUPPET.
THE ABYSS ONLY SPREADS.
ENVELOPING ALL IN THE CALM OF NOTHING.


NO! YOUR NULLIFICATION WAS MY DREAM! NOTHING MORE!
I DON'T WANT THE *END* OF LIFE-- ONLY THE ABSENCE OF *FEELING* IT!


SOON YOU WILL HAVE YOUR WISH, FALSE MAN.

WHAT THE *HELL* IS THIS?
THIS?
THIS IS AN ESCALATION OF AN ALREADY *AWFUL* SITUATION.
THERE'RE HUNDREDS OF 'EM--WHAT'RE THEY DOING?
WHAT ANY OTHER-DIMENSIONAL CTHULHU-TYPE NULLIFICATION DEMONS DO AT AN AIRPORT.
"THEY'RE TRAVELING.
"THIS IS *BIG,* ERIC--*SERIOUSLY* BAD NEWS--AND IT'S ON US TO STOP IT."
NO NEED FOR THE MELODRAMA, THOMPSON.
YOU GO--STOP THAT FIRST JET FROM TAKING OFF.
I'LL STOP ALL THE OTHERS.
HOW?
TRUST ME...

"...NOT LIKE YOU HAVE ANY OPTIONS."
THESE PEOPLE ARE INNOCENT--
THRILL-SEEKING VACATIONERS CAUGHT UP IN A NIGHTMARE.
THINK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS IF THESE JETS TAKE OFF.
THWIPP
BILLIONS OF PEOPLE.
BILLIONS-- TOO ABSTRACT--
--TOO MANY TO WRAP MY HEAD AROUND--
NEED SOMETHING MORE-- PERSONAL.
HAWKEYE.
NEVER MISSES A CHANCE TO BREAK ME DOWN--
MY SAVING THE DAY--AND HIS ASS--
--WILL SHUT HIM UP PERMANENT-LIKE.
IT'S A PETTY MOTIVATION.
GRAKOOOM
SOMETIMES THAT'S THE BEST KIND.

ONE DOWN--
SECOND TAKING OFF--
TIME FOR ONE MORE FAMOUS THOMPSON HAIL MARY PLAY AND--
DAMMIT.
SOME KIND OF A GHOST RIDER WANNABE--
--FAR OUT OF MY WEIGHT CLASS--
THWIPP
NOT A FIGHT I'M UP FOR--
--GET HIM OFF THE BIKE--
--STOP THE PLANE--
DAMMIT-- TOO FAR--NEVER GET PAST HIM IN TIME--
BOTCHED IT--PUT THE FATE OF THE *WORLD* IN THE HANDS OF--

ANT-MAN
SAVIOR OF THE UNIVERSE!
CHARGE, MY INSECT MINIONS!
TODAY YOU DIE THAT MANY HUMANS MIGHT LIVE!
I KNOW THAT IDEA DOESN'T EXCITE YOU--BUT YOU'RE UNDER MY CONTROL--
"--SO TOUGH TA-TAS."
TWOOOM
HE DID IT! HE--
KRAKOOM
YOUR HONOR CARRIES A PRICE, AGENT VENOM.
SSHLICNK
NOT MUCH OF A MORAL, MOTHER GOOSE.

GAZZAKKAAKK
NO...
DELIGHT IN THE POLLUTION GAZE OF VENGEANCE!
MAGNIFYING THE BRILLIANT SLIVERS OF EVIL IN YOUR SOUL UNTIL THEY CONSUME THE FESTERING CANCER OF NOBILITY!
GHERGAHAH!

OH, DEAR GOD, HOW I'M GONNA GLOAT ABOUT THIS.
THAT'S A FINE MOTIVATION-- IF IT KEEPS YOU GOING. HAVE AT IT, MAN.
THE PLANES--?
I DESTROYED THE ENGINES ON ALL BUT ONE.
AND IT JUST TOOK OFF.
THEN THE ONLY CHANCE WE HAVE OF STOPPING THIS NOW...
"...IS TO GET THAT CROWN."
OUTBOUND FLIGHT HAS REACHED CRUISING ALTITUDE. PROJECTED DESTINATION IS CAIRO.
THEY'RE MAKING THEIR MOVE.
TIME FOR ME TO MAKE MINE.
‹PARVEZ, ANGEL, STAY HERE AND PLAY. I HAVE AN ERRAND TO RUN.›
‹CAN YOU DO THAT?›
‹YES.›
WORLD'S WORST BABYSITTER.

JIM! WAKE UP, JIM!
TNG TNG TNG
NOW IS THE TIME TO WAKE THE HELL UP!
N-NATASHA... I'M...I'M NOT HEALED...
NOT READY...NOT FOR MONTHS...
I NEED YOU.
PATCH IN, ACTIVATE THE PYMPORTER, RUN THE STATION, KEEP CALLING ANY OTHER AVENGERS-- AND *WATCH PARVEZ!*
Y-YOU WOKE ME...FROM CRYOSLEEP, STOPPED MY HEALING...TO *BABYSIT...?*
WE'LL TALK ABOUT MODERN GENDER ROLES WHEN I GET BACK, YOU RELIC.
RIGHT NOW...
...I HAVE A FLIGHT TO CATCH.
I DON'T SCARE--TRAINED NOT TO--
BUT IMMEDIATELY THE ENERGY IN HERE FILLS ME WITH *TERROR.*

IF HAWKEYE STANDS IN MY WAY--
--THERE MAY BE ONLY ONE WAY TO STOP THIS FLIGHT.
IMPOSSIBLY FAST--
NO ORDINARY MAN CAN SNEAK UP ON ME--
NOT A MAN--
--AN ABYSS--
--THAT NEVER DID COUNT ON ME.
SHUUUK

DAMN YOU, CLINT.
NO GOOD--
CHRNK
SHRK
GHRA--
CUTS DEEP--
A QUARTER INCH FROM MY SPINE--
ALL THOSE OPTIONS I NEVER HAD TURNING TO DUST--
LEAVING ONLY THE ONE I KNEW--
SHNKK
STOP THIS PLANE BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY.
HGHRAA--

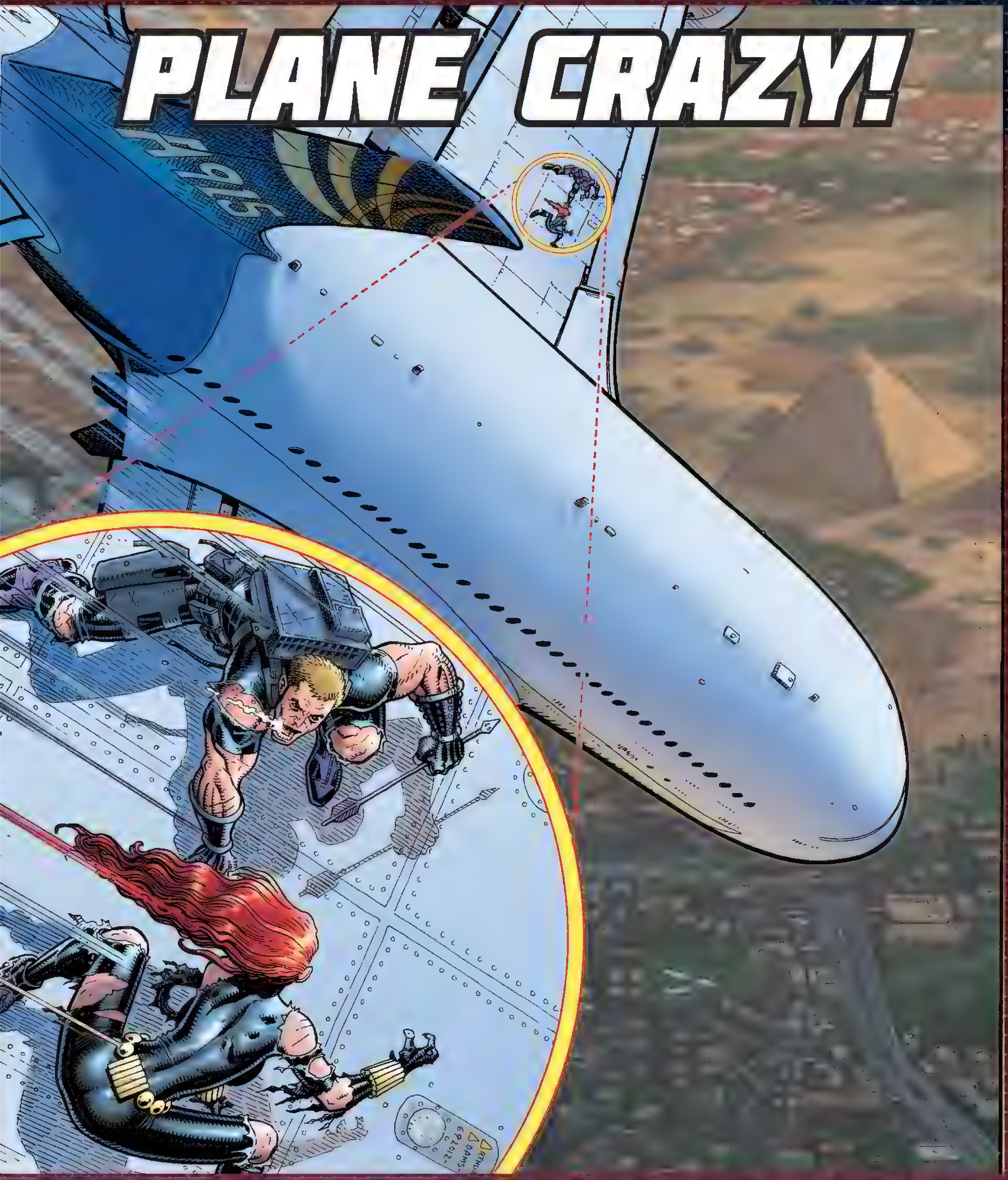
YAW!
TURN TO OLD FEDIR'S METHOD--
--THE COLD FOCUS OF THE ONE MIND.
KNOW ONLY ONE TRUTH: IF THIS PLANE LANDS--
--THE EVIL THAT'S TAKEN MY FRIEND--
--WILL INFECT MANKIND AND--
THIPP
DOOOOOM
YGHA--
AAIEEEE--!
--THERE IS NO BACKUP COMING--
THE HARD SACRIFICE AWAITS YOU.

THIS IS THE ONE COLD TRUTH.
DO NOT THINK BEYOND IT
DAMN YOU, CLINT.
DAMN YOU FOR MAKING *ME* DO THIS--
AND DEAR GOD--
--FORGIVE ME--

NO!
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'VE DONE!
KROOOOOM
I'VE ENSURED THE HEAVEN OF NULL'S KISS ON THIS WORLD'S PAIN.
SEND THE REST ON FOOT.
TO SCATTER ACROSS THE DESERT, TO INFECT ANY THEY FIND.
OKAY, I'M GONNA BEAT ON THE MERRY MEN, YOU GET IN THAT CROWN TASKMASTER'S WEARING, GROW TO FULL SIZE, AND KNOCK IT OFF HIS HEAD.
ALWAYS SOUNDS SO SIMPLE, THE PLANS, RIGHT?
THERE IS ONLY ONE PLAN THAT MAKES ANY SENSE.

ABSOLUTE NULLIFICATION.
TO BE CONTINUED...

NEXT ISSUE:



PLANE CRAZY!

SECRET AVENGERS #32

MYSTERY. SOLVED.
THE ACCLAIMED EPIC REACHES ITS CLIMAX.
OCTOBER 2012
JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY #645
KIERON GILLEN
MARVEL
STEPHANIE HANS
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AVENGERS VS X-MEN
MARVEL
A VS X
ROUND 12
"There Can Only Be One."
OCTOBER 2012

MARVEL
32
REMENDER
SCALERA
WILSON
SECRET AVENGERS®

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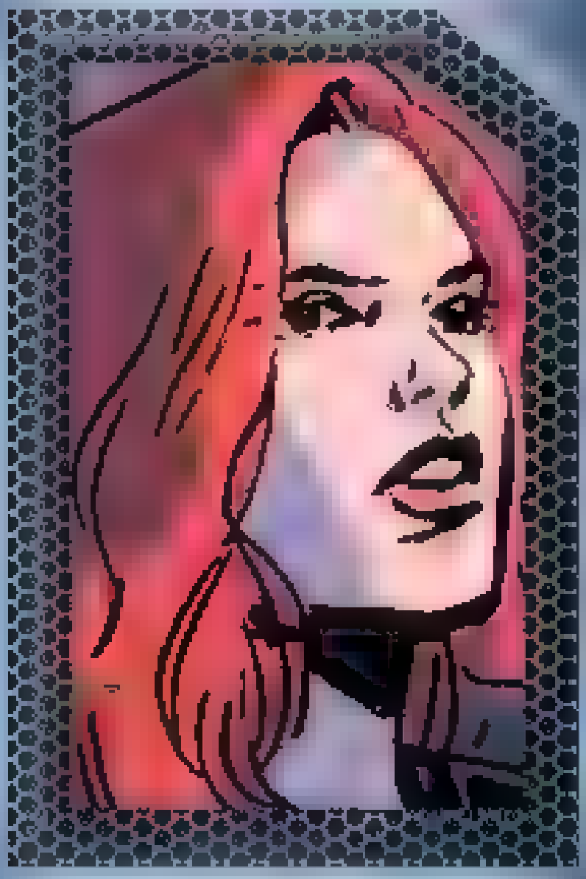
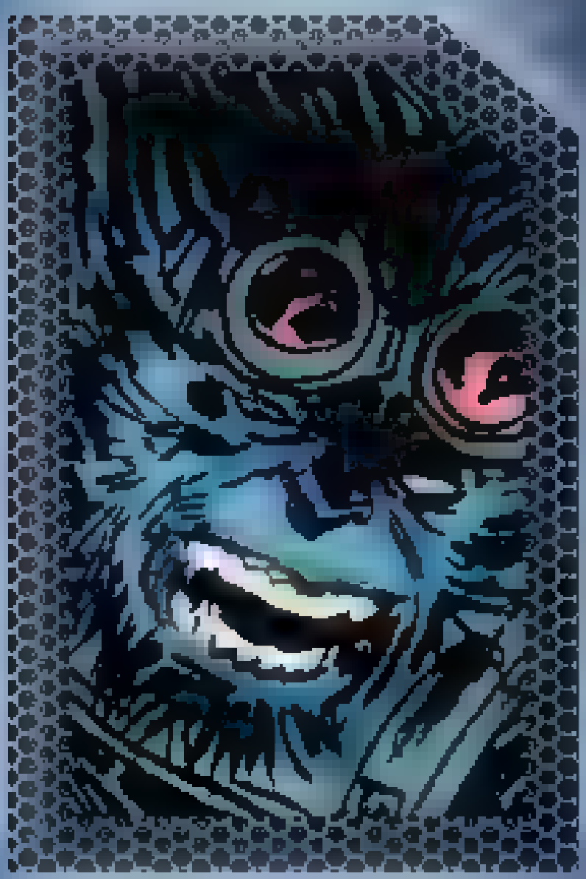
BROUGHT TOGETHER AS A COVERT MISSIONS UNIT BY STEVE ROGERS, A.K.A. CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND BASED ON THE MINIATURIZED LIGHTHOUSE STATION IN ORBIT ABOVE THE EARTH, THE SECRET AVENGERS TAKE ON THE WORLD'S BIGGEST THREATS BEFORE THEY HAPPEN.

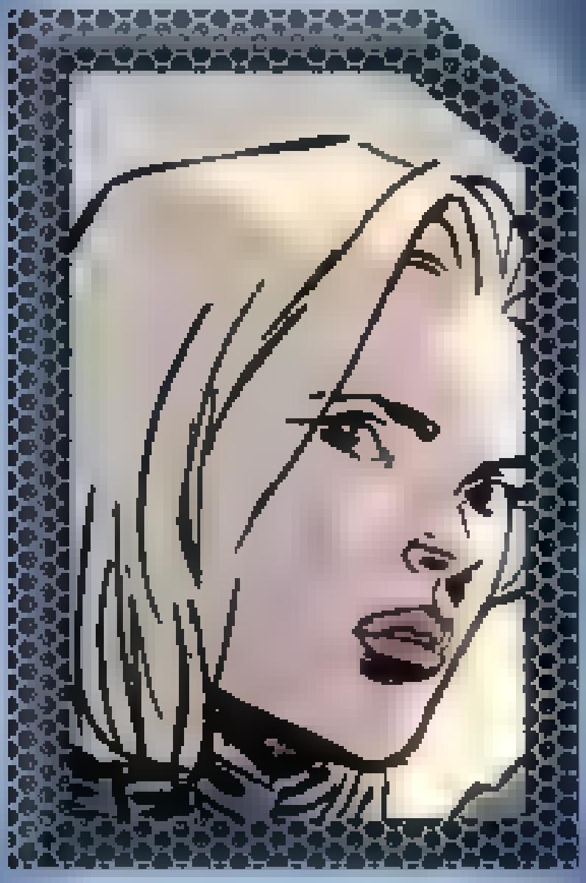
SECRET AVENGERS

TO HOLD BACK A BLACK HOLE

HAWKEYE


BLACK WIDOW

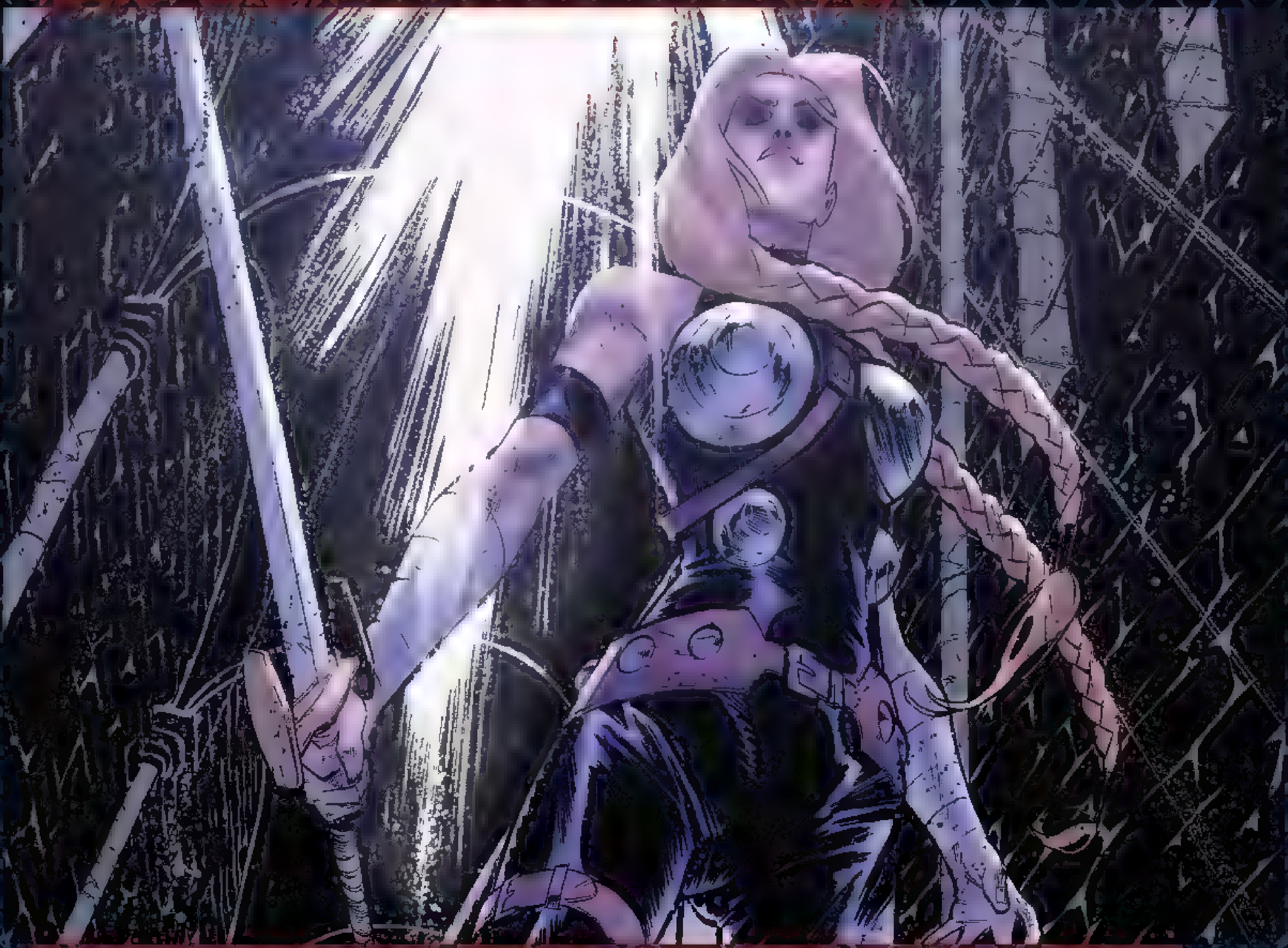

BEAST


VALKYRIE

ANT-MAN

CAPTAIN BRITAIN

VENOM



THE SHADOW COUNCIL HAS RESURFACED, LED BY MAX FURY, A SENTIENT LIFE MODEL DECOY OF SUPER-SPY NICK FURY. OPERATING OUT OF THE RED LIGHT NATION OF BAGALIA, MAX INITIATED AN OPEN CALL FOR THE VILLAINS TO JOIN THE NEW MASTERS OF EVIL. HE PLANNED TO CONTROL THEM USING A CROWN THAT WOULD GIVE HIM ACCESS TO THE ABYSS, A POWERFUL DARK FORCE. HOWEVER, THE MERCENARY TASKMASTER DONNED THE CROWN, AND FOUND THAT THE ABYSS CANNOT BE CONTROLLED.

A HORDE OF VILLAINS AND A NUMBER OF HEROES HAVE BEEN POSSESSED BY THE ABYSS. BLACK WIDOW TRIED TO STOP A PLANE OF THE POSSESSED, WITH HAWKEYE ON BOARD, FROM LEAVING BAGALIA AND SPREADING THEIR INFLUENCE. MEANWHILE, VENOM AND THE DESCENDANT DOUBLE-AGENT ANT-MAN FOUGHT TO STOP THE ABYSS AT ITS SOURCE, WITH ONLY ONE THING STANDING BETWEEN THEM AND THE CROWN – A POSSESSED VALKYRIE.

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FAILED TO BRING THE JET DOWN--
THE PLAGUE WITHIN WILL SPREAD--
UNLESS SOMEONE ELSE CAN DO IT--
TAKE COMFORT--
--UNLESS SOMEONE ELSE CAN BRING THIS JET DOWN--
--THERE IS NO DEATH IN THE ABYSS.

YOU'RE RIGHT.
I SEE IT NOW.
GET OUT.
WE'LL SEE THIS DONE.
YES. YOU ARE A SUPERIOR SPECIMEN.
REST COMES TO ALL LIFE.
THEY ARE ALL SO LUCKY.
<--REPEAT--YOU ARE NOT CLEARED FOR THIS AIRSPACE! BE AWARE, JET FIGHTERS HAVE BEEN DEPLOYED.>*
<CAIRO GROUND CONTROL. DO YOU READ?>
<UNIFIED FLIGHT 2908, IF YOU DO NOT CORRECT YOURSELF, YOU WILL BE SHOT DOWN.>
*TRANSLATED FROM ARABIC.
<CAIRO, WE'D BEEN HIJACKED, BUT THE PLANE IS BACK IN OUR CONTROL.>
<REPEAT--THE PASSENGERS HAVE SUBDUED THE TERRORIST, BUT A SMALL EXPLOSIVE WAS DETONATED. AIR PRESSURE IS GONE.>
<SO UNLESS YOU WANT TO KILL ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY-FOUR INNOCENT PEOPLE...>
<...YOU WILL ALLOW US TO LAND.>
THEY WILL...

"...FOR THEY THIRST FOR THE *GIFT* WE BEAR."
THOSE WHO STAND AGAINST THE TIDE OF NULL FORGO ITS REWARD.
SWOOOHH
VALK--GET IT TOGETHER--
IT'S *ALL* ON THE LINE--
I NEED YOU!
I WILL DECIDE WHAT YOU NEED.
SAY GOODBYE TO YOUR *JAUNTY CHAPEAU,* DEMON-FREAK!
SAY--
--GOOD--
--BYE--
UGHHH!
IT IS *YOU* WHO WILL LEAVE THIS REALM.
GLZAAK
GHA--!

LIED TO ERIC.
TOLD HIM I COULD KILL VALKYRIE, IF IT CAME DOWN TO IT--
CAN'T EVEN MAKE MYSELF HIT HER.
ANOTHER WAY.
THWIPP
Gaa--
GET HER UNDER WRAPS--
--GET BACK IN THERE AND STOP THIS.
THE REAL ODDS OF SURVIVING A FIGHT WITH THAT THING--
THE REAL ODDS DON'T MATTER.
IF YOU'RE GOING TO DIE DOING SOMETHING, THOMPSON--
DIE STOPPING THIS--
WE SEE THEM ON THE STREET.
WE WILL CRUSH ALL WHO REFUSE THE GIFT.
YOU GET TO YOUR FEET, SOLDIER--

--AND YOU GIVE SOME BACK.
KWOKK
NO FLESH ESCAPES THE ASH OF CARRION'S TOUCH!
HOW 'BOUT SOMETHING A BIT *MEATIER?*
AAAIIEEEE!

EVEN THE SPIRIT OF POLLUTION BOWS BEFORE THE ABYSS!
WHO ARE YOU TO DENY THE KISS?
YEAH, DON'T GET ME WRONG, KISSING THE *ABYSS* AND FALLING INTO *NOTHING* *SOUNDS* SUPER--
ZAKK
--BUT I GOT *STUFF* TO DO NEXT WEEK AND--
YERAGAHAH--!
TIME WILL HAVE NO MEANING NEXT WEEK.
SWAKK
THERE WILL BE NO WEEKS.
NO HOURS.
NO LIGHT.
NO DARK.
DRIFTING FOREVER WITH PEACE BROUGHT BY THE GOD OF THE NULL.

"...GOD OF THE LONG SLUMBER."
‹UNIFIED FLIGHT 2908, EGYPTIAN JET FIGHTERS HAVE YOU IN THEIR SIGHTS.›
‹IF YOU DO NOT ABORT YOUR DESCENT AND MOVE TO THE EMERGENCY FLIGHT ROUTE WE HAVE PROVIDED--YOU WILL BE FIRED UPON.›
WHAT IS IT?
THEY ARE TAKING AN AGGRESSIVE STANCE...
"...THEY DON'T BELIEVE MY LIES."
‹‹SQQARKK› HOME LEADER, WE HAVE FLIGHT 2908 IN SIGHT. MAKING APPROACH.›
‹RED SPARROW, WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THERE IS A BIOLOGICAL AGENT ONBOARD THE FLIGHT.›
‹TAKE IT DOWN.›
YOUR ENDING IS SADNESS AND LOSS--THE ERA OF NULL A WONDER YOU WILL NEVER KNOW.
CUT THE KID SOME SLACK--
--HE'S ALREADY DIED ONCE.
BLAM BLAM BLAM
I'LL GET YOU OUT OF HERE--
--BRING HELP--
AND YOU... YOU'LL HELP ME MAKE THINGS RIGHT WITH FATHER? OKAY?
FINE, MAX.
FINE.

‹HOME--THE SIDE EXIT HAS BEEN BLOWN CLEAR, I BELIEVE THE SITUATION IS AS REPORTED.›
‹UNDERSTOOD.›
‹ESCORT THEM, IF THEY STRAY FROM COURSE--›
‹--TAKE THEM DOWN.›
‹COPY THAT. WEAPONS COLD.›
GAKK--
I SEE NOW WHY YOU REJECT THE VOID LIFE.
FALSE MEN--
ZZRANNK
--YOU HAVE NO OPTION TO JOIN.
YOU CANNOT ENTER THE ETERNAL DRIFT, FOR YOU NEVER LIVED--

KRASHH
GOTCHA!
OOF--!
OH--C'MON!
HERE THEY ARE.
OH, LOOK, THE U-FOES AND THE WRECKING CREW...
"...I WAS JUST GOING TO SAY WE NEED MORE PEOPLE PUNCHING US."
<TURN OFF YOUR ENGINES AND PREPARE TO BE BOARDED.>
<BE WARNED-- ARMED PASSENGERS WILL BE SHOT.>
FROM HERE, WE SPREAD FOREVERMORE.
IT IS COMFORTING.

OKAY-- YOU READY, BUDDY?
FOR THIS?
NO.
PLOKK
BUT WE DO WHAT WE CAN.
DIG THAT "CAN-DO" ARMY ATTITUDE--
KWUDD
ERIC!
HE IS NOT YOUR CONCERN--
I AM.
THOOM
OOF--!
THEY ARE BROKEN.

GET UP--
GET THE HELL UP, THOMPSON!
THIS IS IT--
THE BLACK DEMON FEEDING ON YOUR SOUL HAS PROTECTED YOU FROM NULL'S POSSESSION...
BUT IT WON'T WITHSTAND THE WEIGHT OF MY BOOT--
NOTHING LEFT--
NO HAIL MARY PLAY--
CAN'T COVER THE WORLD IN SYMBIOTES--
--BUT I *CAN* COVER *THE ABYSS* IN ONE!
WHAT--?!
NO--! *GET IT OFF!*
GET IT--

--I-I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING!
DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW I GOT HERE!
KROOM
<CLEAR--!>
<PILOTS ARE ALIVE.>
<YOU MEN DID GOOD...>

GHRAGHHH--!
"‹...DEFEATED A SUPER VILLAIN TERRORIST.›"
NEVER DOUBT THE FAMOUS THOMPSON HAIL MARY PLAY!
OH, C'MON! YOU CAME UP WITH THAT AT THE LAST MINUTE.
WHATEVER-- IT WORKED, DIDN'T IT?
GOT RID OF A BIG PART OF THE PROBLEM, YES--
OKAY! GET BACK!
BACK OR I'LL KILL HIM! KILL YOUR LEADER!
MAX FURY? THE GUY WHO PLAYED US?
BROUGHT US HERE TO POSSESS US WITH SOME DEMON BUSINESS?
IF YOU DON'T KILL 'IM-- WE WILL.
AS WELL AS YOU, WHO WE ALSO PLAN TO KILL, SEE?

I GOTTA BE HONEST--I DON'T HAVE ANOTHER FIGHT IN ME.
I GOTTA BE HONEST, YOU BETTER PULL IT TOGETHER--
--BECAUSE WE'VE GOT ONE... COMING...
WELCOME HOME, TEAM.
CONGRATULATIONS ON SUCCESSFULLY SAVING THE ENTIRE WORLD.
EVEN THOUGH NO ONE ELSE WILL EVER KNOW.
BUT YOU'LL KNOW, WON'T YOU, HAWKEYE?
INDEED I WILL.
AND MAX...
SO GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

LATER...
BAGALIA IS NO LONGER *INFECTED* BY THE ABYSS, BUT STILL IN *TOTAL CHAOS.*
HUNDREDS OF SUPER VILLAINS REMAIN IN THE CITY, BUT IT'S STILL A *SOVEREIGN* NATION...
...NO WAY TO SCOOP THEM UP WITHOUT MAKING *INTERNATIONAL UNPOPULARITY* LISTS.
PYM...?
YES, WELL-- THE CROWNS ARE *SAFE*, TUCKED AWAY, SEPARATED IN REMOTE VAULTS ACROSS THE MICROVERSE. I'LL DO MORE RESEARCH BEFORE I ATTEMPT TO DESTROY THEM.
SEE THAT YOU DO, HANK.
IF THAT COVERS IT, THAT WAS THE ONE OF THE HAIRIEST MISSIONS I'VE EVER BEEN ON, AND I'D LIKE TO GO HOME.
BUT FIRST, CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE--WE OWE OUR CURRENT ABYSS-FREE WORLD TO TWO MEN...
GOOD WORK, BOYS.
THANKS, BOSS.
MY HERO.
WE GOT LUCKY MY SYMBIOTE AND ERIC'S HELMET PROTECTED US FROM THE ABYSS.
YES...
...THOUGH THE HELMET HAS NO REASON TO DO THAT.
I'LL HAVE TO INVESTIGATE, BUT I SUSPECT IT HAS TO BE SOMETHING ELSE THAT PROTECTED ERIC--
I CAN SOLVE THAT MYSTERY...
...ERIC IS A *LIFE MODEL DECOY.*

HELL OF AN ACCUSATION, WIDOW.
IN THE CORE, WE FOUND ANT-MAN'S BEACON IN A LARGE PUDDLE OF BLOOD...
BUT WHEN WE FOUND ERIC, HE WAS *UNINJURED.*
IT WAS THE ADAPTOID'S BLOOD.
I DIDN'T GO DOWN WITHOUT A FIGHT.
NO. THAT'S A LIE.
YOU WERE KILLED AND BROUGHT BACK AS A DESCENDANT, SENT HERE TO SPY FOR FATHER--
ENOUGH.
NATASHA, ANT-MAN HELPED SAVE THE WORLD.
HE STUCK WITH VENOM UNTIL THE END, EVEN WHEN IT LOOKED HOPELESS.
I WON'T HEAR ANY MORE OF THIS.
YOU WANT TO IGNORE THIS? YOU WANT TO PUSH THIS ASIDE--*FINE.*
BUT I WON'T BE HERE WHEN IT *BLOWS UP* IN YOUR FACE.

NEW CREATIVE TEAM. SAME ICONIC CHARACTERS.
AVENGERS #9
ASSEMBLE
KELLY SUE DECONNICK
STEFANO CASELLI
NOVEMBER 2012
MARVEL NOW!
#AVENGERSASSEMBLE
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MARVEL NOW!
UNCANNY AVENGERS #1
RICK REMENDER • JOHN CASSADAY
On-Sale 10/10/12

LET HER GO. I'LL TALK WITH HER TOMORROW.
UNLESS YOU THINK SHE'S *RIGHT*...?
FORGIVE ME, I KNOW WHAT YOU'VE JUST BEEN THROUGH, BUT THERE IS NO TIME TO REST, I'M AFRAID.
THE *ULTRAVISIONS* WERE CREATING A STRANGE POWER-*DAMPENING* STATION IN THE ARCTIC...
TOMORROW, BRIAN.
EVERYTHING TOMORROW.
FIRST THING.
I PROMISE.
THE DESCENDANTS ARE PLANNING SOMETHING-- SOMETHING *QUITE BIG!*
THIS DEMANDS OUR *IMMEDIATE* ATTENTION...
I'M GOING *HOME* FOR SIX HOURS TO SLEEP IN MY OWN BED...

"...IT'LL WAIT FOR SIX HOURS."
SWEET LITTLE BOY.
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO WITH YOU?
GOODNIGHT, PARVEZ.
WHAT *ARE* WE GONNA DO WITH HIM?
REED RICHARDS HAS OFFERED HIM A PLACE WITH THE FUTURE FOUNDATION.
OR BEAST CAN TAKE HIM TO THE SCHOOL.
BUT THIS ISN'T THE TIME FOR THAT CONVERSATION.
NO? WHAT CONVERSATION IS IT TIME FOR?
THIS MORTAL COURTING DANCE IS TAKING *TOO LONG.*
WE'RE BOTH THINKING IT...
...SO I'M TAKING IT.
T-TAKING WHAT?

EVERYTHING IS READY HERE, FATHER.
WONDERFUL. WE CAN COUNT ON YOU? WE CAN **MOVE FORWARD?**
CONTAGIOUS ROBOTIC EVOLUTION IS GO. THESE AVENGERS WON'T GET IN THE WAY...

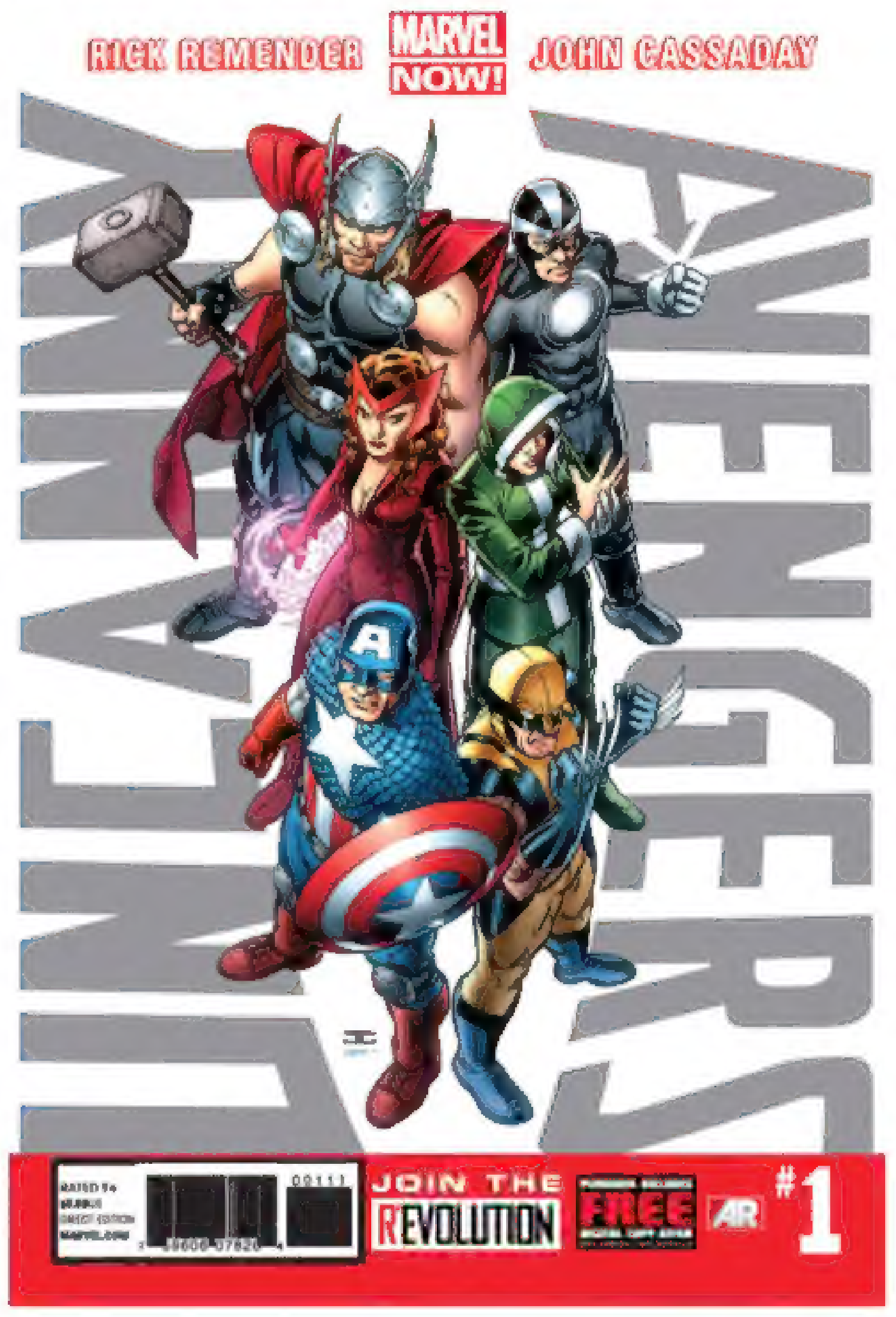
...NOT AFTER THEY FEEL THE BITE OF THE
BLACK ANT!
TO BE CONTINUED...!

THE ASSEMBLY!

YOUR ONE-STOP NEWS SOURCE FOR ALL THINGS AVENGERS!

THE TIME IS NOW! IT'S BEEN LONG IN THE PLANNING, BUT BEGINNING THIS MONTH, THE MARVEL UNIVERSE TAKES A QUANTUM JUMP INTO THE FUTURE WITH THE ROLL-OUT OF ***MARVEL NOW!*** WE'VE PLAYED A BIG GAME OF MUSICAL CHAIRS WITH OUR CREATORS AND TITLES—NOBODY'S QUITE WHERE YOU EXPECT THEM TO BE ANYMORE! AND HALF THE FUN'S GOING TO BE SEEING WHAT YOUR FAVORITE WRITERS AND ARTISTS DO WITH—AND TO—A BUNCH OF NEW AND DIFFERENT CHARACTERS! IT'S A FULL FLIGHT OF NEW CREATORS ON NEW SERIES GENERATING NEW EXCITEMENT—AND ***YOU*** ARE ***THERE!***

THE BIG STORY AROUND THESE PARTS IS CLEARLY ***UNCANNY AVENGERS #1,*** IN WHICH ACE STORYTELLERS RICK REMENDER AND JOHN CASSADAY REACH ACROSS THE AISLE TO UNITE HEROES BOTH MUTANT AND OTHERWISE INTO AN ALL-NEW ASSEMBLAGE ORGANIZED IN THE AFTERMATH OF ***AVENGERS VS X-MEN!*** IT'S LIKE HAVING CATS AND DOGS LIVING TOGETHER—IN THE BEST WAY POSSIBLE! FOR FANS THAT DUG RICK'S WORK ON ***UNCANNY X-FORCE*** AND ***SECRET AVENGERS*** OR JOHN'S ILLUSTRATIONS ON ***ASTONISHING X-MEN*** (AND REALLY, WHO DIDN'T?), THIS IS THE SINGLE ABSOLUTE MUST-READ TITLE OF THE MONTH FOR YOU!

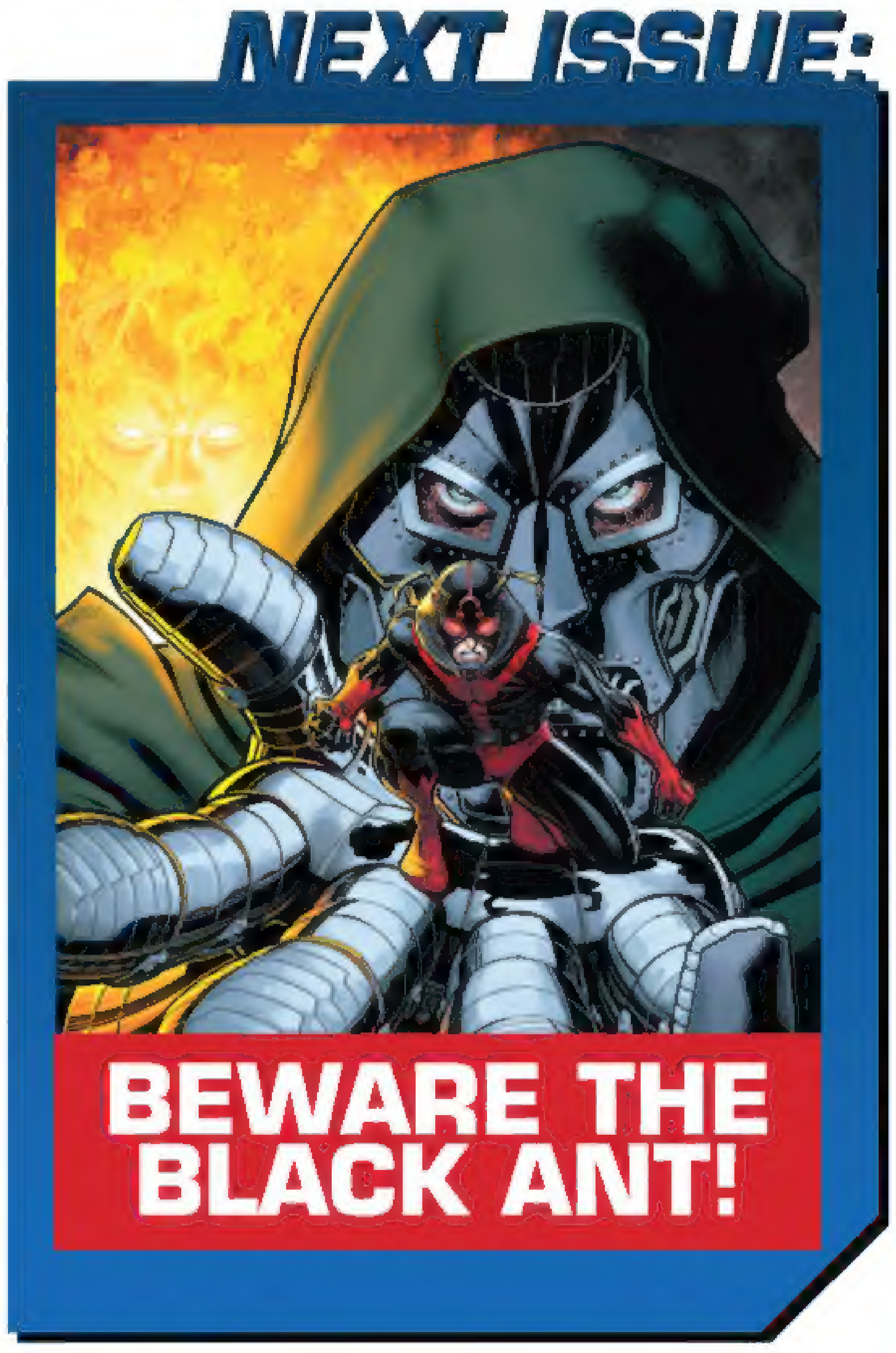


ALSO ON SALE THIS OCTOBER AND OF INTEREST TO ALL AVENGERS AFICIONADOS IS ***MARVEL NOW! POINT ONE #1,*** AN ALL-NEW SPECIAL PROVIDING A TANTALIZING GLIMPSE INTO WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR A NUMBER OF KEY MARVEL CHARACTERS—INCLUDING THE MUCH-MISSED YOUNG AVENGERS! IT'S BEING PRODUCED BY A MURDERER'S ROW OF TOP-TIER TALENT, AND REPRESENTS THE GREATEST VALUE FOR MONEY YOU COULD POSSIBLY IMAGINE! (WE'LL STOP THERE BEFORE WE TIRE OURSELVES OUT WITH EXCITEMENT—YOU KNOW HOW WE HATE TO GIVE YOU THE HARD SELL!)

BUT WITH EVERY BEGINNING, THERE MUST ALSO COME AN ENDING, AND SO WE MUST SAY FAREWELL TO AVENGERS SUPER-SCRIBE BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS, WHO'LL BE WRAPPING UP HIS TENURE TOP-KICKING EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES THIS MONTH AND NEXT! NOT ONE TO GO QUIETLY INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT, BRIAN'S BROUGHT END TIMES TO BOTH THE **AVENGERS** AND **NEW AVENGERS,** AS WELL AS THROTTLING UP **AVENGERS ASSEMBLE'S** THANOS THROWDOWN TO A CLIMACTIC FINISH! AT THIS RATE, THERE MIGHT NOT BE ANYTHING LEFT FOR INCOMING WRITER JONATHAN HICKMAN TO WORK WITH!

ELSEWHERE, THE AVENGERS WILL BE MAKING A SPLASH AS THEY LOCK HORNS WITH EVERYBODY'S FAVORITE ONE-MAN WAR ON CRIME IN THE DEBUT ISSUE OF **PUNISHER WAR ZONE!** AUTHOR GREG RUCKA AND ILLUSTRATOR MARCO CHECCHETTO PROMISE A NO-HOLDS-BARRED THROWDOWN OF EPIC PROPORTIONS IN THIS ONE! BUT, LET'S FACE IT, WITH THE AVENGERS ON FRANK'S TRAIL, HE'LL BE LUCKY TO MAKE IT TO A SECOND ISSUE!

NEXT ISSUE:


BEWARE THE BLACK ANT!

AVENGERS TITLES ON SALE

UNCANNY AVENGERS #1 ☐
IN THE WAKE OF AVX, A NEW TEAM IS FORMED!

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE #8 ☐
THANOS TRIUMPHANT, AS BENDIS AND BAGLEY WRAP UP THEIR TENURE!

AVENGERS #31 ☐
END TIMES BEGINS AS A SIGNAL FROM INNER SPACE SUMMONS THE AVENGERS TO THE MICROVERSE! COULD IT BE...?

AVENGERS #32 ☐
BENDIS CONTINUES HIS FINAL STORYLINE AS THE TEAM GOES IN SEARCH OF ONE OF THEIR OWN!

NEW AVENGERS #31 ☐
END TIMES BEGINS FOR THE NEW AVENGERS AS THE TEAM QUESTIONS ITS VERY PURPOSE!

NEW AVENGERS #32 ☐
BENDIS CONTINUES HIS FINAL STORYLINE AS DANIEL DRUMM CARRIES OUT HIS REVENGE!

SECRET AVENGERS #32 ☐
THE NEW MASTERS OF EVIL USHER IN THE ABYSS!

SECRET AVENGERS #33 ☐
THE RISE OF THE DESCENDANTS! AND THE DEBUT OF THE BLACK ANT!

AVENGERS ACADEMY #38 ☐
GUEST-STARRING WOLVERINE AND THE X-MEN!

DARK AVENGERS #182 ☐
THE DARK AVENGERS TAKE ON THE THUNDERBOLTS! WILL CAIN MARKO, THE FORMER JUGGERNAUT, TURN THE TIDE?

AVX CONSEQUENCES #1-5 ☐
THE DEADLY FALLOUT FROM THE CONFLICT THAT SHOOK THE COSMOS, ACROSS FIVE WEEKLY ISSUES!

A + X #1 ☐
WOLVERINE PARTNERS WITH THE HULK, WHILE CAPTAIN AMERICA CROSSES PATHS WITH CABLE IN WWII!

A-BABIES VS X-BABIES #1 ☐
IT'S THE AVENGERS VS THE X-MEN—IN BABY FORM!

ALSO ON SALE!

MARVEL UNIVERSE VS THE AVENGERS #1 ☐

MARVEL UNIVERSE AVENGERS: EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES #7 ☐

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